DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 203 391 CS 503 374

AUTHOR Ritch, Pamela, Ed.
TITLE Children's Theatre Review, Volume XXX, Number 2, Spring 1981. Research Edition.
INSTITUTION American Theater Association, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE 81
NOTE 51p.: Sponsored in part by Children's Theater Foundation.
JOURNAL CIT Children's Theatre Review; v30 n2 Spr 1981

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Advance Organizers; *Children; *Creative Dramatics; Drama; Educational Research; Learning Activities; Learning Disabilities; *Theater Arts
IDENTIFIERS Audience Response; Chorpenning (Charlotte B); Piagetian Theory

ABSTRACT

This special journal edition contains research reports on children and the theatre. The seven articles discuss the following subjects: (1) how audiences function in participation plays for young people, (2) creative dramatics and handicapped children, (3) the effect of advance organizers on children's responses to theatre viewing, (4) a Piagetian view of creative dramatics, (5) an exploration of the process of learning through drama, and (6) children's theatre theorist Charlotte B. Chorpenning's work with adult drama. (HTH)

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CHILDREN'S
THEATRE REVIEW
Volume XXX, Number 2, Spring 1981

Research Edition

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CHILDREN'S THEATRE REVIEW

The Journal of the Children's Theatre Association of America

RESEARCH EDITION

Volume XXX Number 2 Spring 1981

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This special research edition of CTR is funded in part by a grant from the Children's Theatre Foundation

CTR is published quarterly by the Children's Theatre Association of America, a division of the American Theatre Association. This special Research Issue is published annually in the spring. Manuscripts of approximately 10 pages, double-spaced, in MLA manuscript form, should be submitted to the Research Editor prior to October 1. Material for other issues should be submitted in triplicate, double-spaced, margins set for 55 characters, 90 days prior to publication to Milton W. Hamlin, Editor, *CTR*, Shoreline High School, 18560 1st Avenue NE, Seattle, WA 98155. Advertising deadlines are March 15, May 15, September 15 and December 15. Inquiries about advertising, circulation, subscriptions, and requests for permission to reprint should be addressed to the ATA National Office.

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Approved
CTAA Executive Committee April 1980

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COMMENT

This first annual and special Research Issue of *CTR* represents a commitment by many people to defining, refining, encouraging, and recognizing that research in children's drama is a valid and important activity in which individuals and CTAA should invest time, energy, and funds. Within the past three years, CTAA has formed a Committee on Research under the Vice-President for Policy and Research, published (two) annual classified-ad style updates of current research in *CTR*, offered and presented (to Linaya L. Leaf) a Research Award, and now published this special edition of *CTR*. These accomplishments represent the public state of the art. Much work remains to be done within the organization and its members to produce rigorous, provocative, significant studies that, when wedded in a reciprocal relationship to creative work of the highest quality in children's theatre and creative drama, will define the present state of the field and improve our future practice with and for children. It is hoped that this issue of *CTR* (indeed, all issues) will be critically appraised to determine strengths, weaknesses, and neglected areas and activities of research in the field.

The Editor is grateful to the CTAA Governing Board for supporting all of the endeavors of the Research Committee, and for conceiving and approving the general format of this issue. We are all especially grateful to the Children's Theatre Foundation for funding the 1981 and 1982 expanded Research Issues.

Pamela Ritch

Greer Sucke

INSIDE THE FANTASY: HOW AUDIENCES FUNCTION IN PARTICIPATION PLAYS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Participation plays for young audiences are based on a unique premise: to bring audiences into a play[1] and generate, rather than destroy, fantasy. This premise promotes many provocative questions: how may audiences become part of the play? Do participants retain the status of audience, or do they have a new status? How is fantasy generated? How is it sustained? Answers to these and similar questions are of consequence to participation play writers who design participation, to directors and actors who need an understanding of the psychology and mechanics of participation in order to make it "work," and to those with a general interest in participation who want to further their knowledge of the form.

To answer these questions, seventy-one published participation plays[2] were analyzed according to audience function. The findings suggest that audiences usually participate on one of two identifiable levels and that plays may be classified by the major mode of participation. Furthermore, each mode involves a set of special problems that must be addressed if the illusion, and the participation, are to be successfully initiated and maintained. The purpose of this report is to explain these findings, with support and illustration taken from the published scripts.

Entering the Fantasy

The first, and most important, question is how may audiences become part of the play? In some plays, audiences funtion as themselves or as other people who interact directly and spontaneously with dramatic characters and forward dramatic action. Participation is like fulfilling the wish to make art real, actually to live the lives of the characters depicted in fiction, theatre, or film. The audience knows it is part of an illusion, and does not believe the play is "real life," but it acts *as if* dramatic characters and events were real and this ultimately motivates participation. Since actors and audience unite to sustain a common fantasy, participation plays of this kind will be called "fantasy participation plays."

Brian Way's *The Hat* is one of the fifty-two published plays in this category. Mr. Hump, the Man of Magic, has a problem: his new hat sticks to his head and cannot be removed. Mother, who has magic powers of her own, consults a crystal ball and discovers she needs the help of the entire audience to work the necessary magic. Spectators become puppets, fish, flames of fire, and trees with singing birds to free Mr. Hump.

The audience becomes part of the play by accepting dramatic characters as "real" people and Mr. Hump's problem as a "real" problem. Participatory actions are "real" acts needed to help Mr. Hump. As such, they are also dramatic actions forwarding the plot.

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[1]Pat Hale, ed. *Participation Theatre for Young Audiences* (New York: New Plays for Children, 1972): 1.

[2]With the exception of Jack Stokes' *The Incredible Jungle Journey of Fenda Maria*, published in Betty Jean Lifton's *Contemporary Children's Theatre*, and Eric Nicol's *The Clam Made a Face*, published by New Press of Toronto, all the published participation plays examined for this study were available through the following play licensing companies: Anchorage Press, Dramatists Play Service, Educational Arts Association (Baker's Plays now handles these titles), Involvement Dramatics, New Plays Catalog, New Plays for Children (now New Plays, Inc.), The Playwrights Co-op, Pioneer Drama Service, Samuel French, Inc., and Stage Magic Plays.

A second way audiences may become part of the play is as performers. Spectators may be asked to play needed characters, or contribute theatrical effects, such as music and sounds. As characters, participants may assume one or more identities. Actors may help children develop characterizations before the play or during performance. At times, children are recruited to play roles without advance preparation.

The experience of this kind of participation is like fulfilling the wish to be an actor playing a role for an audience, as opposed to really living the character's life. The play is not accepted as a real event one is living, but as an art work one is performing. Since actors and audience perform the play together, participation plays of this kind will be called "performance participation plays."

Bernice Bronson's *Most Powerful Jujus* is one of the nineteen published "performance participation plays." The Storyteller begins the performance by playing a talking drum and inviting spectators to make sound/gestures indicating wind, rain, and animals. In the body of the play, children assume roles they have been prepared to play in classroom workshops.

The audience becomes part of the play as actors. The sounds and gestures are theatrical effects that enhance the opening narration. Later, participants perform as characters whose actions forward the plot.

Once it is determined whether audiences will participate on the level of fantasy or performance, different sets of problems result.

"Fantasy Participation Play" Problems

In "fantasy participation play," it is important for audiences to think they are living the fantasy, rather than performing. But when spectators participate, they are talking, moving, taking action. How can participation be designed so children will not think they are performing?

To answer this question, it is helpful to define performing. Performing occurs when actors act for audiences endowed with the power of judging. Performers are usually aware of performing, or have the intent to perform. Frequently, but not always, performers rehearse, or in some way prepare in advance.

One effective way of designing participation so spectators will not think of themselves as performing is to have the entire audience participate simulataneously. In *The Hat*, Mother addresses everyone: "We need puppets! Everyone become a puppet. And all the puppets are moving stiffly--making sounds like the sound of a clock. The sound of clocks--moving stiffly--keep the sounds and movement going--keep them going--". Similar requests are made by other characters in Way's plays, including *The Bell, Magical Faces,* and *The Mirrorman.*

Total audience assistance works against the notion of performing in several ways. First, the audience's intent is to provide a needed service, not perform. Their awareness is of problem-solving through direct personal action, not "acting." Second, when everyone participates simultaneously, audiences do not think of themselves as performers because no other spectators remain to observe and judge. During participation, the audience is, in effect abolished. Third, Way's helpful participation is elicited on the spot: spectators are not prepared or rehearsed.

Another way to handle total audience assistance is to design participation that deepens the child's involvement and concentration. In Way's *The Opposites Machine*, the Magician asks children to send him their powers of seeing, touching, tasting, speaking, as well as their strength and sounds of happiness and sadness. Here, the spectator focuses on self-exploration, and perception of participation as performing is minimized.

Group participation becomes difficult in "fantasy participation plays" because remaining spectators are obviously an audience. One solution is to divide the entire audience into

small groups that participate simultaneously. This is really a variation of whole audience participation. In Way's *Magical Faces*, spectators are asked to make masks in groups of four.

Another alternative is to create a deliberate performance within the fantasy. In Claire Jones and Bob Varga's *Too Many Monsters*, Tessie the Ghost asks three spectators to help her with her audition for the position of monster. Taking the children aside, she gives them brief instructions in effective ghosting and they return for a short performance. Participants continue to experience the fantasy, even though the fantasy is performing.

Participation of individuals is the most difficult type to design in "fantasy participation plays" and there are few examples in published scripts. It would be difficult for an individual singled out of a large group not to think of him or herself as a performer. Furthermore, the individual would most likely be self-conscious. This differs from the self-awareness promoted by participation like the Magician's ritual of renewal in *The Opposites Machine*, which leads the participant deeper into the fantasy. Self-consciousness tends to pull the participants out because he or she feels awkward and out of place in the present surroundings.

Also, when an individual is singled out and participates for a long time, the remainder of the audience begins to empathize. Instead of living the fantasy directly as themselves, they begin to live it vicariously, through the selected child. Their experience becomes similar to audiences of traditional plays who empathize with characters, but have no place in the action. One of the chief virtues of the "fantasy participation play" is that the entire audience can live the same fantasy on equal terms. To limit most of the living to one child, or even a selected group, is to fail to harness the full power of the form.

What is the audience's status during fantasy participation? Persons present at most traditional theatre are either performers or audience. During performance, actors may represent dramatic characters, but the audience remains audience. Audiences of "fantasy plays" may begin as audiences, observing and judging, but when the audience is recognized and participation starts, the audience is no longer audience, because it is not observing and judging, nor is it performer because it does not think it is performing. What the audience has become is a group character needed in the fantasy that takes action during moments of participation. Note that the audience *becomes* and *is* the group character, as opposed to actors who *represent* characters. In subsequent moments, when the audience is not participating, but watching other characters, it does not return to the vantage of traditional audiences, but continues to observe from the point of view of the group character. The group character may be given Way's name for audiences, "us." "Fantasy play" audiences are always established as "us." When small groups or individuals are chosen to participate, they are always taken out of the larger "us."

Giving audiences the status of "us" creates at least two major problems. First, unlike characters who can excuse themselves and go elsewhere, "us" lacks physical mobility because of its size and conglomerate nature. Second, for all intents and purposes, "us" must be regarded as omnipresent, always part of the present action. In most of the published "fantasy participation plays," "us," once established, is always there.

To justify the audience's lack of mobility and support its omnipresence, action is frequently limited to one setting. In Jones and Varga's *The Magic Pouch*, the action occurs in ". . . an open place surrounded by happy children." Characters move in and out of the "open place," while the audience conveniently stays put. Rather than justifying where the audience is, the writers justify characters going to the "open place."

In other plays, place is limited to the leading character's domain (the Toymaker's toyshop in *The Mirrorman*, and the Magician's house in *The Opposites Machine*.) Here the problem is to justify the audience's presence.

A consequence of the audience's omnipresence is omniscience. Since "us" is always there, it always knows what is happening. To create suspense in traditional dramas, audiences may become privy to information withheld from characters. The audience may

know Claudius is planning to kill Hamlet, but Hamlet does not. Even though spectators may like and identify with Hamlet and want him to live, they are powerless, through the dramatic convention accepted by performers and traditional audiences, to warn him and prevent his death.

If *Hamlet* were transformed into a "fantasy participation play," and young spectators liked and identified with him, they would let him know of his danger and he would be bound to accept their warnings. If the audience is to be prevented from following the impulse to help, it must be thwarted. This is exactly what happens in *The Incredible Jungle Journey of Fenda Maria*. Spectators cannot help the Doctor get his medal back because the Witch has cast a spell making them "invisible" and "inaudible." Their efforts will do no good.

A second consequence of the audience's omnipresence is that anything said or done by "us" must be accepted. If characters pretend that "us" did not make a particular response, or made a response contrary to that actually made, it would violate the illusion that "us" is living the play by denying the truth of "us's" actions.

"Performance Participation Play" Problems

If "fantasy participation play" audiences have the status of "us," what is the status of "performance participation play" audiences? In all published plays in this category, audiences participate as performers. In some, they perform in a variety of ways, as in Tom Behm's *Tarheel Tales Theatre*, when they make wind sounds in "Jack and the North West Wind," chant the refrain "Everyone knows old Dry Frye" in "Old Dry Frye," and volunteer to play the rocking chair, hammer, and fire bush in "Wicked John and the Devil." In others, audiences play specific characters and do not shift roles, as in *Most Powerful Jujus*.

A number of problems relate to audience members playing characters. In "fantasy participation plays," "us" remains "us" for the entire play and is regarded as omnipresent and omniscient throughout. Characters assumed in "performance participation plays" may always be considered part of the present action, as they are in Jones and Varga's *Seven Tests for the Chief*, a play about a tribe of Indians (the audience) selecting a chief, or characters may be "in" some scenes and "out" of others, as in *Most Powerful Jujus*.

When audience members are always part of the action, they may be expected to assume the point of view of the character throughout the play, as they do in *Seven Tests for the Chief*. When characters are "on" and "off," children may take the point of view of characters while participating, and the point of view of spectators when they are "off." Even while "off," children may be sensitive to remarks about their characters, which may help to motivate subsequent participation. How do children know when their characters are "on" and "off"? In some plays, this is indicated by a narrator, as in William Oakley's *Rumpelstiltskin*. In others, characters do the signaling, as in *Most Powerful Jujus*.

But it is important that when audience members play characters, they do not perform exactly as actors do. First, actions completed by audience characters are frequently structured as improvisations, rather than scenes with fixed dialogue as those usually learned by actors. Second, participation as characters differs from performing by actors. in amount of preparation time. Actors may rehearse for a period of weeks, but children are prepared in a matter of minutes, before or during the performance. How may children be effectively prepared within a short period of time?

In Saphira Barbara Linden and Ira Rosenberg's *Creation*, children are prepared in a ritual, an initiation ceremony, that sets a serious tone and creates a sense of mystery about what is to come. Spectators are changed from outsiders to initiates with a place in the enactment. Participants are united by a common experience which is the basis of their group identity later.

In classroom workshops before *Most Powerful Jujus*, actors provide background information about the play and characters. Group responsibilities are outlined and

children practice their duties. Bernice Bronson, the director, believes that the close rapport between actors and children heightens perception and makes the experience more personal.

A possible problem with advance preparation is loss of spontaniety in performance. This is to some extent countered by designing actions as improvisations which permit spontaneity within an improvisational framework. Even if the improvisation is done in advance, it will still be different in performance. Another solution is to complete the expected improvisation and then place some or all of the participants in new situations. The children must then determine the character's probable course of action based on what they have done so far. This happens in Bronson's *In the Beginning*, when part of the audience becomes a grove of swords repelling the hunters, Sun and Moon. Unexpectedly, Sun captures two swords and later asks them to chop down a forest, an act appropriate to sharp swords.

Two considerations are important in planning character participation within "performance participation plays." Participation should involve participants and entertain observing spectators. Involvement reduces a participant's self-consciousness, and entertainment value keeps spectators interested. Good examples of participation displaying both qualities appear in *In The Beginning*. One group becomes a grove of pointed swords and another turns into a grove of trees in order to thwart Sun and Moon. Children are likely to be involved because their objective is clear: to stop the hunters. This is easy to express physically by moving together to form virtual human walls. Participation also entertains because it is important to the story, and is staged in an interesting manner.

When children participate as group characters, what can be done to keep them from appearing as "extras"? One solution is to give them the same distinguishing attributes of individual characters, including past, point of view, values, and attitudes. Within the group, individual characterizations may be developed, although the personality of the entire group is what communicates most clearly to the audience.

A second consideration in designing strong group characters is to make the group's actions meaningful both to the play and to the participants. The actions of the swords and trees in *In the Beginning* are important to the plot because they are part of Mother's plan to find the best husband for her daughter. As a consequence of their dramatic significance, the actions become meaningful to participants.

When the entire audience participates as different group characters, as in *Most Powerful Jujus*, each group views the play in a different way, depending on the group character's point of view and participatory actions. This colors the relative importance of events and characters, but is not a drawback unless participants lose sight of the whole and focus only on their own roles.

In "fantasy participation plays," there is some problem when individuals or small groups participate by themselves for long periods of time. This discourages "us" from living the play and makes it similar to a traditional audience. This is less of a problem in "performance participation plays" when audiences are not living the play, but performing it. The major difficulty might be jealousy! Remaining children might envy the chosen, especially if the participation seems like fun.

Conclusion

This examination of seventy-one published participation plays concludes that audiences may participate on one of two levels and that each level has a set of related problems that must be solved if participaton is to be effective. But what does participation, regardless of level, *do* for audiences? Although spectators have been part of--in fact, necessary--to the theatrical event, participation gives a sense of belonging to the play itself or to its performance. Participation provides a way for the audience to go deeper into the mysteries of the fantasy, and to be thrilled and moved by what they discover. The challenge for those

who make participation theatre (writers, actors, and directors) is to make participation the path to what *is* thrilling, moving, and worthy of discovery. Otherwise, participation is an exercise in human orchestration, or form, with little substance. Participation is a means, and often a pleasurable means, for achieving a goal. But the goal is paramount: it must be clear, inspired, and dazzling if the entire experience is to glow.

Linaya L. Leaf

CREATIVE DRAMATICS AND HANDICAPPED CHILDREN: A SURVEY

For many years the field of creative dramatics as it relates to handicapped persons has been neglected in this country.[1] Isolated studies have been done that addressed the use of creative drama in remediating physical or emotional problems or as an aid in the education or socialization of individuals with a specific handicapping condition. No studies have been broad-based enough to look at creative dramatics as it relates to handicapped persons in a variety of potential learning situations. Major bibliographic studies in creative dramatics, children's theatre, and theatre have either completely neglected consideration of drama and theatre when they are done by, with, or for handicapped individuals or have qualified their consideration to include only work that does not emphasize creative dramatics or theatre in therapy. Further, only one survey was found that investigated the extent to which creative dramatics was being used in programs for exceptional (handicapped and gifted) children.

In 1958, Barbara McIntyre evaluated the curricula of special schools for exceptional children, examined the curricula references listed in the *Directory for Exceptional Children*, surveyed the teacher training curricula for teachers of exceptional children, and sent a questionnaire requesting information concerning programs of creative dramatics for the exceptional child to fifty of the colleges and universities appearing in the *Directory of College and Universities Offering Training in Children's Theatre and Creative Dramatics*, as well as to individuals, teachers, clinicians, and organizations known to be interested in activities for the exceptional child.[2]

McIntyre's examination of curricula references for children attending special schools was unfruitful. Not one school referred to dramatics. Her examination of curricula for the training of teachers of the exceptional child in ten leading universities was also negative. Creative dramatics was receiving little, if any, emphasis in such teacher training.

McIntyre received twenty-seven responses from questionnaires sent to colleges and universities. Seventeen of those institutions placed no emphasis on creative dramatics with the exceptional child, four were using it in speech clinic and in the teacher training program, two were conducting classes for the exceptional child and two were including exceptional children within regular programs. Two universities had programs that emphasized the gifted child.

Purpose

The intent of this article is to present the results of a survey conducted in 1978 relevant to creative dramatics and handicapped children in the United States. The survey was

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[1]Handicapped children and youth are considered to be persons between the ages of five and eighteen who are mentally retarded, hard of hearing, deaf, speech impaired, visually handicapped, seriously emotionally disturbed, orthopedically impaired, other health impaired, deaf-blind, multihandicapped, or having specific learning disabilities who, because of those impairments need special education and related services. *Federal Register* Vol. 42, No. 163 of Rules and Regulations (Aug. 23, 1977), p. 42478.

[2]Barbara McIntyre, "Creative Dramatics for Exceptional Children," in *Children's Theatre and Creative Dramatics*, eds. Geraldine B. Siks and Hazel B. Dunnington (Seattle: U. Washington Press, 1961): 152-158.

undertaken as part of doctoral research then in progress at the University of Oregon in Eugene, Oregon.[3]

The questionnaire was designed to accomplish the following objectives:

(1) uncover bibliographic data pertinent to creative dramatics and handicapped individuals that might have been missed by computer checks, library research, letters, and interviews;

(2) discover which bibliographic sources were most frequently referred to by those who might be expected to have knowledge in the area of creative drama and handicapped children;

(3) discover which persons were most frequently regarded as authorities and resources in the field of creative dramatics when it is done with handicapped children and youth in the United States;

(4) find out whether individuals who are in charge of child drama programs and special education departments in this country consider creative dramatics a discipline that could be useful for those training to work with handicapped children or useful as a method of integrating handicapped students into public school settings; and

(5) discover whether attitudes toward the use of creative dramatics with handicapped children differ from attitudes about its use with non-handicapped persons of the same age.

Method

A questionnaire was constructed and mailed to 139 leaders in the areas of child drama and special education in the United States: directors of child drama programs at universities that had indicated strength in the area of creative dramatics;[4] leaders known to be working in the field of creative drama and/or arts by, with or for handicapped individuals;[5] regional directors and members-at-large of the Children's Theatre Association of America; directors of university programs that offer doctoral degrees in the training of teachers of exceptional children;[6] and directors of state departments of special education.[7]

Problems

The cover letter for the present questionnaire specified a definition for creative dramatics.[8] It did not define "handicapped." Three respondents indicated that it would have aided them in their answers had a definition for the word "handicapped" been included. Bearing this criticism in mind, however, the respondents did complete the questionnaire. It was decided that their responses would be retained.

Several respondents gave more than one answer to a question, even where the question specifically requested a single response. This happened most frequently in the question that asked for the identification of an authority figure in the area of creative dramatics and handicapped children in the United States and for the question that requested the respondent to identify a person as a source of current information on the subject of creative dramatics and handicapped populations in the United States. However, the persons who

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[3]Linaya Leaf, "Identification and Classification of the Educational Objectives of Creative Dramatics When It Is Done With Handicapped Persons Ages Five Through Eighteen in the United States" (Ph.D. dissertation, U. Oregon, 1980).

[4]Wendy Perks, "Children's Drama 1976: A Review of University Programs in the United States," *Children's Theatre Review* (Summer, 1976): 6-12

[5]Gene Fink, Agnes Haaga, Kathryn Martin, Barbara McIntyre, Wendy Perks, Dorothy Prokes, John Sharpham, Geraldine Siks.

[6]Those schools belonging to the Higher Education Consortium in Special Education were selected.

[7]Norman F. Elliot, ed., *Patterson's American Education* (Mount Prospect, IL.: Educational Laboratories, Inc., 1977).

[8]The term creative dramatics refers to informal, improvisational, process-oriented drama that focuses on the personal development of the participant rather than on the entertainment of an audience. Based upon Jed. H. Davis and Tom Behm, "Terminiology of Drama/Theatre With and For Children: A Redifinition," *Children's Theatre Review* (Winter, 1978): 10-11.

responded more than once to a question also appeared to be the ones with the most relevant information. The decision was made to retain the completed questionnaires, and the total number of responses per question were tabulated on the two questions for which this predominantly occurred.

Results

The total number of questionnaires sent out was 139. The number returned was 102; the percentage of return was 73.38. Many of those who responded included additional comments and mailings that were valuable. This is an unusually high response when one considers that the questionnaire was a three page document that asked for names, courses, and bibliographic data that may have required an additional time investment from the respondents.

Persons directly connected with the child drama field were found to have more information relevant to creative drama and handicapped children than did leaders directing special education departments at the state and university levels. Response was lowest from directors of university programs offering doctorates in the training of teachers of exceptional children, and this group also offered the least in terms of relevant information. Several members of this group returned the questionnaire uncompleted, with letters indicating that they had no knowledge of the subject matter. Of those who did respond, none had information about persons in the field or about bibliographic data.

Directors of state departments of special education appeared to have little information available. Fourteen bibliographic notations were elicited from thirty-six respondents. Twenty-eight persons indicated that they had insufficient information to venture an opinion regarding who might be an authority in the field of creative drama and handicapped children. Twenty-two persons responded that they did not have enough information to respond on who they might write to for current information about this subject area.

Persons working in the area of child drama either at the university level, the CTAA level, or in the field were found to have the most relevant bibliographic information and the highest degree of interest and enthusiasm for the subject.

In terms of overall response to the questionnaire from the five groups, fifty persons indicated that they believed creative dramatics should be a required part of the curriculum for those training to be teachers of handicapped children; forty-eight felt that it should be optional. Only two persons responded that they did not believe creative dramatics should be part of the curricular offerings for special education teachers.

The majority of respondents (fifty-five) indicated that creative dramatics would be very useful as a means of integrating handicapped students into public classroom settings. Thirty-eight respondents believed creative dramatics would be moderately useful for such a purpose. Four persons indicated that it would not be useful.

The greater number of respondents indicated that creative dramatics would be useful as an educational tool, recreation, therapy, and art form for both handicapped and non-handicapped persons. Responses revealed little difference in attitudes toward how creative dramatics should be used with handicapped and non-handicapped children. For example, if a respondent selected "an art form" as a response to the questions of how creative dramatics should be used with non-handicapped children, the respondent was usually found to select the same response for how creative dramatics should be used with handicapped children. Seventy-four persons specified that creative dramatics should be used as an educational tool, recreation, therapy, and art form with handicapped children. At least three persons wrote in the qualification that when creative drama is used as therapy for non-handicapped or handicapped children, it should be done under the guidance of a trained therapist.

Additional recommendations for ways in which this subject could be used with handi-

capped and non-handicapped individuals included the following: self-discovery, personal creativity, to explore creative processes, development of self-esteem, to help children understand their world and experiment with roles in it, and to develop the child as an artist. The only recommended uses of creative dramatics with handicapped children that were not mentioned for the non-handicapped child were the strengthening of positive peer relationships, insight into self, and using the arts to teach functional and basic skills.

Barbara McIntrye (nineteen responses), Wendy Perks (nineteen responses), and Eleanor Irwin (fifteen responses) were the persons most frequently considered authorities in the field of creative dramatics and handicapped persons in this country. Fifty-eight respondents did not think that they had sufficient information to select an authority figure in this area.

Respondents most often indicated they would write to Wendy Perks (twenty-six responses) or Barbara McIntyre (sixteen responses) for current information on the subject of creative dramatics with handicapped populations in the United States.

The following pertinent bibliographic information was revealed by this questionnaire:

(1) Barbara McIntyre (four responses), Sue Jennings (four responses), and Emily Gillies (four responses), were the authors most frequently mentioned.

(2) *Creative Dramatics for All Children* by Emily Gillies (five responses), *Remedial Drama* by Sue Jennings (five responses), and *Informal Dramatics: A Language Arts Activity for the Special Pupil* by Barabara McIntyre (five responses), were the books most frequently mentioned by respondents.

(3) Pamphlets, monographs, articles and theses were mentioned, but none of these received more than one or two responses, and many of these notations were dated.[9]

In universities that indicated they had course offerings in the subject area of creative dramatics, the majority (forty-three responses) offered this course in the theatre department with a smaller number (five responses) offering this course in the education department. The course was most frequently mentioned as being optional (forty-one responses) for those training to be teachers of handicapped children. Only five responses indicated that creative dramatics was a required course in such teacher training.

Of those universities indicating course offerings in creative dramatics, twenty-two indicated that such course offerings(s) did give some attention to creative dramatics with handicapped persons. One respondent indicated that the focus was on the potential of creative dramatics for speech therapy. Sixteen respondents indicated that the creative dramatics course(s) gave no special notice to the area of handicapped persons. Occasionally it was stated that a university did offer a creative drama course that gave some attention to the handicapped child, but the special education department of that same university did not know of the existence of such a course.

Respondents indicated that courses relevant to arts and the handicapped other than creative dramatics were being offered. Art (nine responses) and music (eight responses) were the departments most frequently mentioned as having course offerings pertinent to the arts and handicapped individuals.

Conclusions and Recommendations

It was beyond the scope of this research to verify the responses to this questionnaire. The questionnaire was constructed and tabulated by one investigator. Bearing these limitations in mind, the following conclusions can be drawn.

(1) Child drama leaders have more relevant information pertinent to the field of creative dramatics and handicapped children than do special education leaders, but even so, much of their information is dated.

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[9]For a listing of bibliographic citations submitted, write to the author, Department of Theatre, Illinois State University, Normal, IL 61761.

(2) Barbara McIntrye, Wendy Perks and Eleanor Irwin are most frequently cited as authorities in the field of creative drama and handicapped children.

(3) *Creative Dramatics for All Children, Remedial Drama,* and *Informal Dramatics: A Language Arts Activity for the Special Pupil* are the books most frequently referred to for information relevant to creative dramatics and handicapped children in the United States, and few persons in the field of creative drama and special education even know of these sources.

(4) The majority of respondents indicated that creative dramatics should be part of the curriculum for those training to be teachers of handicapped children.

(5) The majority of respondents indicated that creative dramatics would be very useful as a means of integrating handicapped students into public school settings.

(6) The current attitude toward the use of creative dramatics with handicapped and non-handicapped children is that it would be useful as an art form, an educational tool, a form of recreation, and as therapy for both groups of children.

(7) Little progress has been made since the McIntyre survey of 1958 (published in 1961) concerning the actual use of creative dramatics in the training of teachers of exceptional children (however, the present survey only dealt with handicapped children and not with gifted children). Leading universities that train teachers of exceptional children were not using creative dramatics in such training then, nor are they using it now.

(8) Although McIntyre referred to the handicapped and the gifted in her definition of exceptional children and although the sample universities may differ between the McIntyre survey and the present survey, it appears that more universities that offered courses in creative dramatics in 1978 (22 affirmative responses) gave attention to the handicapped child than universities which responded to the McIntyre questionnaire in 1958 (eight affirmative responses).

Current legislation is mandating that handicapped children receive a free, appropriate education in the least restrictive environment. Leaders in the areas of child drama and special education have indicated that creative dramatics would be valuable as a way of integrating handicapped children into public classroom settings and that it should be part of the curriculum for those who are training to be teachers of handicapped children. Attitudes toward the use of creative drama with handicapped and non-handicapped children are similar. Based on this questionnaire, the following recommendations are made:

(1) Directors of programs for handicapped children at the state and university levels should be informed of the values of creative drama, values which hold true for all children, and should be informed of where they can go to get current bibliographic information in this area.

(2) Creative dramatics should be a recommended course for those training to work with handicapped children.

(3) Updated bibliographies in the area of creative dramatics and handicapped persons should be made to child drama leaders, as much of their bibliographic information is dated, especially in regard to articles, theses, pamphlets, and monographs. Many are looking for current information in this area.

(4) Creative dramatics courses at the university level should give some attention to its application with handicapped populations.

(5) Current children's theatre and creative dramatics bibliographies of the Children's Theatre Association of America and current bibliographies of other divisions of the American Theatre Association should be expanded to include items that focus on creative dramatics and theatre when they are done by, with, and for handicapped individuals.[10]

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[10]The CTAA national bibliographies in Children's Theatre and in Creative Dramatics are currently being expanded to include items that relate specifically to handicapped individuals.

(6) Those persons currently working in the area of creative drama with handicapped persons should be encouraged to publish their work in journals that have a high degree of visibility to the broad spectrum of individuals working in creative dramatics and/or theatre.

Helane S. Rosenberg
Jeffrey K. Smith

THE EFFECT OF ADVANCE ORGANIZERS ON CHILDRENS' RESPONSES TO THEATRE VIEWING

The knowledge that our perception is colored by our anticipation easily predates psychology and could conceivably predate theatre. As is frequently the case, those involved in the creative process employed this notion long before its import was recognized by social scientists. Consider, for example, the opening of Melville's *Billy Budd:*

> This year 1797, the year of this narrative, belongs to a period which, as every thinker now feels, involved a crisis for Christendom not exceeded in its undetermined momentousness at that time by any other era whereof there is record.

Or, more succinctly and more powerfully, Dickens' opening to *A Tale of Two Cities:* "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times. . ." In both cases, the author's purpose was to frame our minds for what is to follow. Psychologists refer to information that describes or suggests what is to follow as "advance organizers."

Problem

The purpose of this study was to investigate the affective consequences of providing various video-taped advance organizers to children prior to their viewing of a live theatre production. Videotapes were used as advance organizers for three reasons: (1) to keep the nature of the organizer as consistent as possible across groups; (2) to have the organizer be in a medium similar to theatre; and (3) to control for differences in reading ability.

Childrens' responses to the theatre were measured by a semantic differential instrument (described later). The semantic differential was used because it is easy for young children to understand and because a large amount of information can be gathered in a short period of time.

Literature

The utility of advance organizers for instructional purposes has been made explicit by Ausubel (1960; 1962; 1963) and those who have followed him (see Schuly, 1966; Jerrolds, 1967; Allen, 1969; Barron, 1971; Clawson, 1973; Lucas, 1973; Fuller, 1974; Moore, 1975).

These advance organizer studies usually measured learning of science or social science subjects, in a traditional school setting, as well as test materials that were primarily written. In a major article on the nature of advance organizers, Barnes and Clawson (1975) analyzed thirty-two definitive studies of advance organizers. The selected variables utilized to categorize these studies included length of treatment, subject ability, subject

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area, grade level, type of organizer and cognitive gain. No study had been located in any art or art-related area; no study had been located that measured affective gain.

Most of the studies surveyed utilized written materials as the advance organizer. In terms of the nature of the written material, factors such as level of abstraction or length of material were considered. Only one study dealt with more aesthetic issues such as paper color, position of words on the page, or typesetting (Feller, 1973). Of the non-written advance organizer studies, two utilized simulation gaming (Scandura & Wells, 1967; Livingston, 1970), one utilized graphics (Barron, 1971), two utilized visuals (Weisberg, 1970; Luckas, 1972) and two utilized audio (Lucas, 1972; Feller, 1973). Those studies utilizing non-written advance organizers provided these authors with the impetus to conduct this study.

In a later definitive article, Lawton and Wanska (1977) did not locate any more arts-related studies, but did recommend three positive procedures which have applicability to research in advance organizers for the theatre field. They suggested:

> (1) Techniques should be developed for identifying and constructing organizers for particular types of learning; (2) the relationship between the concept of advance organizer and associated expository techniques and learning activities needs further refinement; and (3) several stages and factors, including pretesting, construction of advance organizers, and subsequent posttesting must be considered in developing and evaluating advance organizers.

From these recommendations, it would seem that educational researchers, who often seem to be of a different breed than the theatre scholar, also feel the need to test in areas other than the cognitive, to refine teaching techniques with advance organizers, and to develop more refined pretests and posttests that measure what is intended.

Experts in the field of theatre for young people have written about the nature of one sort of advance organizer, the study guide, and its effect on the theatre experience (Goldberg, 1977; McCaslin, 1978). Although not terming them so, those in the field have also written about other types of advance ogranizers such as actor visits (Rosenberg, 1975) and pedagogue visits (P. Goldberg, 1977). A conference at the Kennedy Center in April 1978 investigated the current forms of performance-oriented teacher materials. They concluded that the most utilized advance organizers were printed materials, videotapes, slides/tapes, artists visiting the classroom, and cassettes (Kukuk, 1978). Practitioners in the field of young people's theatre are eager to measure the effect of these newly developed guidelines and controlled situations. However, the time and personnel involved insure that empirical studies of this nature are rarely conducted. Therefore, the authors felt the need to determine the affective consequences of video-taped advance organizers on children prior to their viewing a live theatre production.

Method

Subjects

The subjects were three hundred fourth, fifth, and sixth grade children from a small predominantly white, middle class school district in the midwest. Intact classes were randomly assigned to one of five treatment groups for the purposes of this study.

Treatment

Two days before they were to attend the production of *Story Theatre*, each class experienced the treatment. There were five treatment groups: four groups were randomly assigned to see one of the four videotapes; the fifth group received no advance organizer.

All groups attended the same performance of *Story Theatre*. All children sat within rows B (second row from front) and L (eleventh row from front). The seating was arranged to disperse children from various groups throughout those rows.

Two days after they had attended *Story Theatre*, each group was given the semantic differential. The administrator of the test read the same directions to all groups. The directions stressed perception of the production, not quality. The semantic differential was administered to one group at a time, although all groups were tested the same morning.

Tapes

Four videotapes were developed, two containing general theatre content and two pertaining directly to the play the children were about to see. In each set (of two), one tape concerned technical issues and the other concerned actors and their roles.

Contents of the Advance Organizer Videotapes

Tape RT--Related Technical/Education

This tape is twenty-one minutes long and is divided into three parts. In part one, the narrator discusses the technical nature of theatre and shows the audience around the set. In the second part the narrator interviews the set designer, who shows the model of the set, discusses the use of wood as a media, and demonstrates the use of various stage tools. In the third part, the narrator interviews the costumer who shows sketches of costumes, costume patterns and final costumes from the production. The nature of the materials used in the costumes is also discussed.

Tape RA--Related Actor

This tape is twenty minutes long and is also divided into three sections. In the first, the narrator discusses the rehearsal process for *Story Theatre*. In the second, the narrator conducts a step-by-step rehearsal with the actors, pointing out blocking, pacing, and vocal and physical characterization. After the rehearsal, the narrator questions the actors in such areas as role preparation, particularly in terms of differentiation of the various roles to be played.

Tape NT--Non-related Technical

This tape is twenty-one minutes long and is divided into four sections. In the first section, the narrator discusses the technical requirements for theatre. In the second section, the narrator interviews a technical assistant who describes lighting effects of various instruments. In the third section, the narrator interviews a mask maker who demonstrates how theatre masks are made. The costumer then discusses the development of a costume concept.

Tape NA--Non-related Acting

This tape is twenty minutes long and is divided into three segments. In the first segment, the narrator discusses the nature of the rehearsal process. In the second, the narrator conducts a rehearsal with actors, pointing out blocking, character development and pacing. The final section is an interview with the actors.

Measure

The instrument developed for this study contained sixteen items in a semantic differential format. The adjective pairs for the instrument are presented in Figure 1.

	1	2	3	4	5	
hot	———	———	———	———	———	cold
hard	———	———	———	———	———	soft
good	———	———	———	———	———	bad
loud	———	———	———	———	———	quiet
full	———	———	———	———	———	empty
dry	———	———	———	———	———	wet
rough	———	———	———	———	———	smooth
old	———	———	———	———	———	young
little	———	———	———	———	———	big
high	———	———	———	———	———	low
light	———	———	———	———	———	dark
messy	———	———	———	———	———	neat
tame	———	———	———	———	———	wild
greedy	———	———	———	———	———	generous
pretty	———	———	———	———	———	ugly
fast	———	———	———	———	———	slow

Figure 1
Adjective Pairs for Semantic Differential

Subjects were instructed to circle the number from one to five for each adjective pair that best described their feelings and opinions concerning *Story Theatre*.

The adjective pairs used in the semantic differential were drawn from a content analysis of approximately 1500 essays concerning theatre experiences written by elementary school children (not subjects in this study).

Results

Each of the sixteen adjective pairs was subjected to a two way (treatment by response) chi square analysis. This analysis tests the null hypothesis that responses are randomly distributed within treatment groups for each item. Whenever a significant difference was found, responses were analyzed on a group by group basis, thus allowing a more indepth investigation of group differences.

Significant differences were observed on seven of the sixteen adjective pairs of the semantic differential: hot/cold ($p=.003$); good/bad ($p=.006$); loud/quiet ($p=.01$); rough/smooth ($p<.001$); high/low ($p=.03$); pretty/ugly ($p<.001$); and fast/slow ($p=.02$).

Discussion

The responses of the control group, which had no pre-theatre experience, provided a perspective for viewing the results of the four experimental groups. The control group showed responses significantly different from chance on only three adjective pairs (rough/smooth, high/low, pretty/ugly), and in each case, the tendency was for more neutral responses (3's) than other responses. Thus, in the absence of an advance organizer, it appears that responses of subjects to the semantic differential are not those of the "group" at all, but diverse individuals.

In contrast to the control group, the two groups that saw videotapes directly related to the play revealed nine instances of significant differences on the semantic differential

instrument (five for the "related actor" group and four for the "related technical" group), and in only one instance was this due to a preference for the neutral response.

The "related actor" group saw rehearsal of several scenes of *Story Theatre*. Interestingly, they viewed the play as more "quiet" than "loud," more "smooth" than "rough," and more "slow" than "fast". These preferences are logically consistent with the idea that prior exposure to the content of the play would lead children to view the play more for its theatrical qualities, thus becoming less involved in the action of the story. Additionally the "related actor" group tended to rate the play as either "good" or "bad," not neutral. However, these children rated more heavily in the neutral category on the "pretty/ugly" dimension.

The "related technical" group, which saw a videotape that emphasized the beauty of the costumes and the angular quality of the sets, responded that the play was more "rough" than "smooth," and more "pretty" than "ugly." These responses could be the result of direct influence of the videotape. On the other hand, these children, who had no prior exposure to the action of the play, thought the play to be more "loud" than "quiet." Also, there were somewhat fewer "good" ratings than "bad" from this group.

The responses of the children who saw videotapes about theatre, (but not about *Story Theatre*), are a bit more difficult to sort out. The "non-related actor" group saw the play as more "hot" than "cold" and more "low" than "high." The "non-related technical" group also viewed the play as "hot" rather than "cold." Additionallly, they responded more heavily to "quiet" than "loud," "high" than "low" and "slow" than "fast."

The reasons for these preferences elude the authors, but it is interesting that skewed preferences do exist. Remember in the control group, the only unusual patterns were preferences for neutrality. There appears to be *some* influence with the non-related videotapes, but this influence is sufficiently subtle to have avoided delineation.

Conclusions

The evidence points to the following conclusions:

(1) prior exposure to the content of the play appears to cause children to distance themselves somewhat from the action of the play;

(2) prior exposure to technical aspects of the play will lead children to focus on those aspects, and perhaps appreciate them, but does not affect their responses to the action of the play;

(3) prior exposure to aspects of theatre unrelated to the play about to be viewed influences childrens' responses to the play, but in an unknown fashion;

(4) no prior theatre exposure leads to responses that are essentially idiosyncratic with individual children.

Future Implications

Two important issues for the future remain: (1) of what benefit is this work to the field? and (2) where might we go from here?

First, it seems that two ideas might be taken from this research by the practitioner. If a class (group of children) is to have a common experience when viewing theatre, then they should have some common expectations or points of departure. Since children's theatre is most frequently a *group* experience, it would probably be beneficial to conceive of that activity as containing pre-viewing, viewing, and post-viewing components.

The second concern is the balance between empathy and aesthetic distance. Young children "lose themselves" in the action and characters of the play. It is frequently difficult to get children to distance themselves from the action of the play in order that they may appreciate other aspects of the performance. This "distancing" ability probably never develops in some individuals. The evidence in this study suggests that the balance may be

tilted toward aesthetic appreciation through the use of an advance organizer that discusses the content of the play. (Of course, one would not want to disclose aspects of the play that are intended to excite, surprise, or intrigue.)

This study, although quite limited in its scope, does suggest a number of possibilities for future research. This study dealt only with the affective responses of children: the cognitive consequences (the focus of most of the advance organizer work) are left untouched. Second, the data simply indicate that something is happening in the balance between empathy and aesthetics. The researchers are not certain what or how.

Third, responses of the groups who received non-related information await comprehension. Very little is understood concerning how these children reacted. This is a particularly important area to understand if materials for general distribution (and not specific to certain plays) are to be created. Finally, this study lends support to the idea that children's theatre and childrens' responses to it might be better understood as a result of study from a social sciences perspective.

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Charles E. Combs

A PIAGETIAN VIEW OF CREATIVE DRAMATICS: DELIMITED, ADAPTIVE PLAY AND IMITATION

Creative dramatics should occupy an important and legitimate place in the school curriculum for two significant reasons: 1) as an aspect of theatre and dramatic art it is a medium of aesthetic education; and 2) it provides a format for cognitive, affective and psychomotor learning which is substantiated by Jean Piaget's model for intellectual development.

In order to validate the latter assertion it would be helpful if a model Piagetian-influenced program of creative dramatics were established and evaluated over a considerable period of time. However, until such a study is conducted, a purely theoretical treatment[1] must suffice. Ironically, perhaps the denomination "Piagetian-influenced program of creative dramatics" is a misnomer, for both the practice of creative dramatics as it traditionally has been conducted, and Piaget's suggestions for education in general and arts education[2] in particular, seem remarkably parallel. Not only does Piaget's model seem to fit the theories and practice of leading figures in the field of creative dramatics, but one, Geraldine Brain Siks in her book *Drama With Children*,[3] briefly refers to Piaget, emphasizing this parallelism. Conversely, Hans G. Furth, a Piagetian scholar, notes in his book *Piaget for Teachers*,[4] the potential of creative dramatics as an aid in social and creative thinking and intellectual development. Clearly, then, a relationship between Piaget's theories and the practice of creative dramatics exists. This study is designed to articulate and clarify that relationship.

Briefly stated, within Piaget's epistemological model, the child is in a dialectical relationship with his world. In this relationship he constantly constructs knowledge by "assimilating" new phenomena into his system of "schemes," his existing framework for understanding things and events. At the same time, he "accommodates" or adjusts these schemes to fit new occurrences or observations--both physical and social--thereby modifying his conception of both himself and his surroundings. In this process of "decentration" the child moves from an "egocentric" or subjective construction of reality to a more objective centered one. Thus, the result of the child's interaction with his environment is the structuration of knowledge.

Knowledge is structured through the establishment of progressively more accurate schemes, or internalized and regularized ways of acting or of thinking. Piaget's thesis is that development will take place regardless of social intervention (e.g. schooling), and that exercise of schemes is the essential component of that development. His theory is based on the biological phenomenon of adaptation, a process that he translates into a psychological frame of reference and calls equilibration. Equilibrium is achieved through the dual processes of assimilation and accommodation: the assimilation of new information into existing schemes, balanced by the concomitant accommodation of these schemes to fit new information.

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[1]Charles E. Combs, "Piaget's Epistemology Applied to an Analysis of Creative Dramatics in Education," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1977).

[2]Jean Piaget, "Art Education and Child Psychology," in *Education and Art*, ed. Edwin Ziegfeld (Paris: UNESCO, 1953): 22-23.

[3]Geraldine Brain Siks, *Drama With Children* (New York): Harper and Row, 1977): 21-22.

[4]Hans Furth, *Piaget for Teachers* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.,1970): 116-127.

In general, then, the child progressively adapts to his world, organizing data in the form of action and operational schemes.[5] The child's progress is dependent on the factors of 1) experience with objects, 2) social experience, and 3) maturation – all of which are subsumed under the functioning of equilibration, the prime factor in mental growth since it integrates the other factors.

From a Piagetian perspective, creative dramatics is based on the natural tendencies of the child toward play and imitation as well as on the factors that Piaget considers to be essential to development (experience, social transmission, maturation, and equilibration). Play and imitation are both affective functions that serve to express and satisfy the needs of the ego. In play, assimilation is dominant; in imitation, accommodation to external models prevails. As such, they are not adaptive modes of behavior since they do not display a balance between assimilation and accommodation. However, they are complementary functions to the development of logical operations in the cognitive domain, since within Piaget's model of the genesis of knowledge, affectivity is closely interrelated with cognition. In this sense, they may contribute to adapted thinking in their more advanced forms, especially if they are seen within the context of creative dramatics, which is an activity in which play and imitation are kept in balance.

Piaget notes four distinct types of playful or "ludic" activities that the child manifests as he or she grows older: 1) exercise or practice play, which occurs during the sensorimotor period; 2) symbolic play, which reaches its height between two or three and five or six; 3) games with rules, which begin around seven or eight and are socially transmitted; and 4) games of construction,[6] in which children from about eleven years of age and upward demonstrate a tendency away from play and toward adapted intelligent activity. These last form a boundary between games and non-playful activity, wherein the constructional game occupies "a position half-way between play and intelligent work or between *play and imitation*."[7] (emphasis added)

This is significant since play and imitation have complementary roles in the child's construction of reality insofar as they manifest an imbalance between assimilation and accommodation, while adapted intelligence shows an equilibrium between the two. With age, imitation is integrated into the adaptive thinking of the child in the form of reflective imitation, which is "used as an aid to the fulfillment of the needs inherent in the child's activity."[8] Similarly, play is reintegrated into general intelligence when the conscious symbol is replaced by constructional games and the creative imagination.[9]

By delimiting and guiding the child's natural inclination toward play and imitation, the

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[5]According to Piaget's theory of genetic epistemology, the child, from birth to about twelve years of age, progresses through four major stages of active relationship with his environment: 1) the sensorimotor stage (birth to two years); 2) the preoperational stage (two to seven years); 3) the concrete operational stage (seven to eleven years); and 4) the formal operational stage (onset at approximately eleven years). The modes of the child's interaction with his environment range from the simple reflexive actions of the neonate to the more complex abstract thought processes (logical operations) of the adolescent.

In Piaget's thinking, knowing is derived from acting wherein the child "transforms" reality in order to understand its structure. Underlying the notion of transformations is the idea that there exists two separate but complementary aspects of thinking: the figurative and the operative. The figurative functions are perception, imitation, and mental imagery, which Piaget considers to be interiorized imitation. The operative aspect of thinking deals with systems of transformations rather than with static states. These transformations between states may include not only actions, but may also include intellectual operations (internalized actions carried out through representation). Representation is a symbolic function and an aspect of figurative knowing.

[6]A constructional game may consist of building models such as airplanes, railroads, etc. as well as larger environments which may be inhabited by the players, such as stores, forts, etc.

[7]Jean Piaget, *Play, Dreams and Imitation in Childhood*, trans. C. Gattano and F.M. Hodgson (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1951; The Norton Library, 1962): 133.

[8]Ibid., p. 178.

[9]Ibid., p. 205.

teacher of creative dramatics may aid in his or her intellectual development. This is suggested by the apparent similarity between the processes of creative dramatics and the processes of intellectual development proposed by Piaget. In creative dramatics the teacher structures a problem situation that poses the child with a state of disequilibrium. The child actively resolves the posed problem within certain parameters, thus assimilating the problem to existing schemes and accommodating these schemes to the problem as well as to the limits of the creative dramatics setting.

The components of creative dramatics are the committed acting/playing of the child, the guidance by the teacher, the focus inherent in the collective problem-solving activity. In this group activity, the play of the child must be task-oriented, and governed by a collective objective goal, rather than being egocentric and controlled by individual subjectivism. The guiding of the child's collective play, the task-orientation of the play, the infusion of the collective play with rules or the demands of ensemble acting, and the reflective evaluation of the collective play are the elements of social intervention – teaching – which modify play, transforming it into the medium of creative dramatics. In this sense, then, creative dramatics may be seen as a purposeful fusion of symbolic play, a game with rules, and a game of construction. Significantly, this fusion allows creative dramatics to be seen as an adaptive activity that Piaget would characterize as a bridge between the realm of play and that of imitation and work. Insofar as creative dramatics is a guided and focused activity involving imitaiton, it is accommodative; while insofar as it is based on symbolic play, it is assimilative. The accommodative demands – the *limits* to symbolic play – are the means of structuring such play so that it becomes an adaptive activity manifesting an equilibrium between assimilation and accommodation. When there is an equilibrium between assimilation and accommodation, according to Piaget's theory, learning takes place.

While creative dramatics may be seen as social intervention in the developmental process, it is a type of intervention that utilizes such natural inclinations as play and imitation, and encourages adaptive activity by placing the child in a situation wherein he or she experiences and resolves, albeit in a fictional setting, events and problems that involve social, personal, and moral disequilibria. Through social intervention and experience, the child employs the process of equilibration in order to adapt to the exigencies of the dramatically enacted problems. Furthermore, the child must adapt to the social situation inherent in the structure of the creative dramatics group, as well as to the requirements of "acting" as a skill in itself. Finally, the child's thinking and acting are continually challenged by questions from the teacher as well as by the comments and evaluations of peers. Thus, there are numerous adaptive demands placed on the child by participation in creative dramatics, while at the same time there are numerous opportunities for the child to exercise operational thinking. These opportunities occur when the child is given the chance to discover the interrelationship of personal, social, and moral cause and effect, allowing the formation of transformational "laws" whereby the nature of the transformations from one personal or social state to another may be understood. Thus, the growth process of operative thinking in the personal, social, and moral areas of the child's life may be seen to parallel the mechanism of his or her development of the conception of space, and of causality in the physical world.

Insofar as the child is enabled to develop transformational laws, to see relationships, to generalize, to abstract, and to form concepts from concrete dramatic experiences, the child is utilizing operational thinking. Certainly, this conception of education through creative dramatics is compatible with Piaget's epistemological position that the child continuously constructs new structures (schemes) for thinking (the representation of transformations of states or reality). John Flavell, in his work *The Developmental Psychology of Jean Piaget*, comments on Piaget's beliefs about education in general which reinforce this conception.

> In trying to teach a child some general principle or rule, one should so far as is feasible parallel the developmental process of internalization of actions. That is, the child

should first work with the principle in the most concrete and action-oriented context possible; he should be allowed to manipulate objects himself and "see" the principle operate in his own actions. Then, it should become progressively more internalized and schematic by reducing perceptual and motor supports, e.g., moving from objects to symbols of objects, from motor action to speech, etc.[10]

While this methodology may be applied to education in the area of physical knowledge such as mathematics and science, it is also appropriate in the areas of personal, social, and moral knowledge such as may be treated in creative dramatics. Furthermore, from a Piagetian perspective, creative dramatics might be considered to be a valuable form of social experience in which the child, through exposure to the ideas and attitudes of others, is forced to adapt his or her own cognitive structures. In this respect, creative dramatics may help to alleviate the tendency of the child towards egocentric thought and behavior, a major obstacle to the understanding of objective reality. For example, Herbert Ginsburg and Sylvia Opper, in their book, *Piaget's Theory of Intellectual Development*, suggests that social interaction not only lessens egocentrism, but also contributes to affective and cognitive advance.[11]

The problem of helping the child overcome egocentric orientation is the major concern of workers in creative dramatics, yet as the child grows older, thinking in the realms of physical reality, social relations, moral sentiments, play, and all modes of representation is naturally progressively decentered. Therefore, one must see creative dramatics, like any mode of educational intervention, as an aid in a natural process which precipitates the child to make a cognitive and affective advance by giving him or her the opportunity to act, interact, and "manipulate" elements of reality in a controlled situation.

Significantly, the manner in which the dramatic situation is controlled is an area in which there is an appreciable body of work; yet this work represents numerous divergent views regarding a definition of, and methodology for, creative dramatics. Felicitously, Piaget's theory provides a unifying structure within which the many approaches to creative dramatics may be viewed. In the subsequent brief examination of the work of Geraldine Brain Siks, Dorothy Heathcote, and Viola Spolin this commonality will be illustrated. While this is by no means, an exhaustive study of their work, or of the totality of work done in the field of creative dramatics, these three practitioners are reflective of the breadth of opinions in the field.

Geraldine Siks stressed the notion that creative dramatics is an *art* for children. Insofar as it is for *children*, Siks infers that the *form* that creative dramatics provides for the expression and concretion of the child's feeling is *flexible*. This may be contrasted with the less flexible form of the scripted theatrical presentation (the formal play) wherein operative thinking may be subordinated to the figurative knowing involved in the memorization and recitation of lines, and the imitation of a play director's instructions. While creative dramatics, according to Siks, is not a mature art form, it derives from the art form of theatre, and is best taught and experienced within the discipline of theatre; yet, emphasis is placed on individual creative expression and personal growth within the limits of theatrically-influenced cooperative play.

In addition to the discipline involved in group work, Siks is cognizant of the inherent self-discipline required by creative dramatics. Thus, a tacit assumption in her definition of creative dramatics is that there is an orderly and disciplined approach to the dramatic improvisation, the physical activity, or the discussion and evaluation of a session.

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[10]John H. Flavell, *The Developmental Psychology of Jean Piaget*, (New York: D. Van Nostrand Company, 1963): 83-84.

[11]Herbert Ginsburg and Sylvia Opper, *Piaget's Theory of Intellectual Development*, (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersery: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969): 228.

Significantly, it is the role of the teacher to assist the child to achieve and internalize the requisite discipline involved in participation in dramatic activities; for if "rules" are imposed only from without rather than being internalized, imitation, figurative knowing, and accommodation will dominate operative thinking.

Similarly, Dorothy Heathcote is concerned with disciplined, committed playing, emotional control and expression, and reflective evaluation. She writes:

> Dramatic activities are concerned with crisis, the experiences of life, small or large, which cause people to reflect and take note. . . .The role-taker draws upon all his previous relevant experience, all his information, factual and subjective, his abilities, failings, blind-spots and skills, his character and personality. Thus when studying and seeking to understand the 'pretend' situation he draws all relevant information to the surface and forefront *and puts it into action* but (sic) interacting with others who are also in the same situation.[12]

Accordingly, Heathcote, in Piaget's terms, sees drama as an activity in which the child uses cognitive and affective schemes, constructing totally the transformational laws of reality, to solve a problem actively and cooperatively. Further, she envisions the problem as primarily an emotional one, and provides the opportunity for the child to form new schemes through a type of abstraction[13] which she calls "reflection."

The improvisation, for Heathcote, provides the child with a working model of behavior in an emotional confrontation. In actively exploring the problem inherent in the drama, the child is required to draw upon existing emotional and intellectual schemes, and actively resolve the dramatic conflict. Moreover, the child is guided in the process of reflection upon self's and others' roles in the drama, and is thereby encouraged to consolidate new thoughts in relation to the dramatically posed problem and the spontaneously enacted solution. Thus, children are afforded the opportunity to discover or construct concepts regarding certain areas which Heathcote avers are neglected in education: "emotional control, understanding of the place and importance of emotion, and language with which to express emotion."[14]

In her work with children, Heathcote employs the principles of focus, definition, elaboration, and form. Using the same rules that apply to the actor, yet not placing the demands of formal acting on the children's play, Heathcote emotionally (in-role) focuses the children's attention, defines the problem, encourages the children's elaboration of the dramatic scene, and helps to shape their improvised actions into a dramatic form that she calls a "*fitness of purpose* of all the material contained in it."[15] Thus through elaboration within the rules of drama, children are encouraged to act, to feel, and to think, thereby structuring their experiences. Heathcote writes:

> The rules of drama are definite but they are so infinitely flexible and basic that they offer a wide range of elaboration . . . .So improvisation is really an elaboration procedure which employs all relevant knowledge to this date--factual and emotional information--and tests it in action . . .Theatre itself is a game of elaboration within a strict framework of intent. In a sense theatre and improvisation begin at the same point.[16]

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[12]Dorothy Heathcote, "Drama and Education: Subject or System?" in *Drama and Theatre in Education*, eds. Nigel Dodd and Winifred Hickson (London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1971): 51-52

[13]There are two kinds of abstraction in Piagetian terminology: formal or reflecting abstraction, and physical abstraction. Both involve feedback from experiences, and lead to the formulation of generalizations, logical concepts, and objective knowledge.

[14]Dorothy Heathcote, "Drama as Education," in *Children and Drama*, ed. Nellie McCaslin (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1975): 104.

[15]Ibid., p. 59.

[16]Ibid., p. 53.

It would seem that Heathcote, in Piaget's terms, sees theatre as well as improvisational drama as a game of construction that has certain rules. Further, the game is played with a decided intent. Whereas in theatre the playwright may define the intent and may delineate certain rules (lines, setting, characters, etc.), in drama it is the intent of the teacher to stimulate the awareness of the children by providing a problem situation in which they might contribute collectively to the solution. In this manner, the children may use the "game" as an aid in their intellectual, social, and moral decentering.

While Heathcote encourages the use of dramatic improvisations as the primary activity in her drama classes, others, such as Viola Spolin, advocate the use of theatre games and exercises. Spolin's exercises, although originally developed in the context of recreational drama, are often used in both creative dramatics and in actor training. Therefore, there seems to be a multiple use for her games and exercises depending upon the context of their use and the critical bias that is applied in their evaluation. Spolin's approach to the teaching of acting is one of experiencing, evaluating, and internalizing, a process quite similar to that proposed by Piaget for the contruction of knowledge.

Spolin suggests that an acting workshop be based upon participation in theatre games and exercises. Through group involvement in games, she proposes that the players will develop personal freedom within the rules, will develop personal techniques and skills necessary for playing the game, and will internalize these skills and this freedom or spontaneity, thereby becoming creative game players. The games that are played are social, and are based on problems that must be solved. The problem to be solved is the object of the game, and provides the "Point of Concentration" (POC). These rules of the game include the "structure (Where, Who and What) and the object (POC) plus group agreement."[17] In order to help the players achieve a committed and focused solution to the problem, Spolin employs the technique of "side coaching," wherein she may encourage the player to keep his attention on the point of concentration. Thus, she structures the play of the child by intervening with comments that constantly keep the child in touch with objective reality, thereby encouraging accommodation. Further, in structuring the play of the children, Spolin clearly is aware of the transition from egocentric play to cooperative play, games with rules, and games of contruction that makes their play an adaptive activity. In general, then, through the process of participation in theatre games and exercises, the child may not only exercise operational thinking and figurative knowing, but may decenter his or her behavior in its intellectual, social, and ludic aspects.

Because creative dramatics is a fusion of collective symbolic play, a game with rules, and a game of construction that is not only ludic but is also adaptive, the notion of conscious pretense or make-believe is integral to its practice. Therefore, it is noteworthy that Piaget considers the effect of collective play to be the lessening of the child's ludic belief. This is especially important since the practice of creative dramatics is designed to strengthen rather than weaken ludic belief in the collective play of the children. Thus, a major goal of creative dramatics is the reinforcement of ludic belief (agreement to pretense combined with consciousness of make-believe) in cooperative play. In order to strengthen ludic belief in cooperative play, certain rules for such play must be employed. When the child has accepted these "rules of the game," as Spolin would call them, he or she may spontaneously and freely play within them. Thus the teaching of creative dramatics involves the structuring of symbolic play with rules for such play which reinforce ludic belief.

While the rules inherent in creative dramatics will not vary with the age of the children, the form that their playing takes will change with age. The rules for participation in creative dramatics fall into three general areas: 1) personal commitment; 2) physical and mental discipline; and 3) necessary attitudes. Through work in these areas, the child may develop the capacity to act in an ensemble (to play together with mutual sensitivity and

[17]Viola Spolin, *Improvisation for the Theatre*, (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1963): 390.

credibility). While free or spontaneous symbolic play demonstrates a preponderance of assimilation over accommodation, improvised ensemble acting balances the two. Within the ludic framework, the child acceeds to certain accommodative limits, the process of ensemble playing in itself being a demonstration of social and personal decentration. Moreover, operational thinking is used in the process of dramatic improvisation. This is especially apparent in the process of reflection or evaluation. Through conscious reflection on the consequences of his or her actions, as well as the quality and skill of playing, the child may exercise operative thinking, while using figurative knowing of states of reality in order to symbolize or represent them. Through actively representing and manipulating the fictional events in improvisation, the child may perceive an inter-relationship among these events, thereby forming concepts through the process of abstraction. Thus, the improvisational ensemble acting of creative dramatics is an adaptive activity involving play, imitation, figurative knowing, and operative thinking.

In summary, it may be proposed that creative dramatics provides a medium of adaptive activity for children that influences their cognitive, affective, social and moral decentration. Moreover, it is an activity which is pursued within the context of the arts, theatre specifically. As such, it may provide aesthetic pleasure as well as an intellectual challenge where the child as creator, actor, audience and critic,[18] uses his or her affective and cognitive schemes to examine and structure objective reality. Further, from a Piagetian perspective, the approaches to creative dramatics advocated by leading practitioners in the field all appear to have a remarkable commonality. Therefore, it would seem that creative dramatics, as it traditionally has been practiced, is a valuable medium for the development of the child, and that the value of this mode of teaching is validated and illuminated by the developmental theory of Jean Piaget. The task that remains is to apply Piaget's theories to an experimental program of creative dramatics.

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[18]Howard Gardner, *The Arts and Human Development*, (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1973), Chapter 1. Mr. Gardner uses the paradigm of the four participants in the artistic process (artist or creator, performer, audience member, and critic) in his examination of the relation of art to development.

Lou Furman

CREATIVE DRAMA AS A VEHICLE FOR ASSESSING COMPREHENSION

This investigation developed a systematic approach for the use of creative drama as an assessment tool in areas other than those designated as creativity or drama. The focus of the research was on those behaviors that demonstrated comprehension skills in children. Practical and theoretical implications are discussed, particularly as they relate to the potential of creative drama as a vehicle for observation.

Background

Support exists for the use of observation techniques in assessing student behaviors.[1] To utilize such methods to their maximum, an observer must view processes involving the whole person responding to their environment.[2] Drama fulfills this requirement of observation. Slade stated that drama is a "special combination of mental, emotional and physical activities. . .which absorbs the whole energy of the person."[3] Total absorption in accomplishing drama tasks demands that the person use all available resources, the whole person, and the entire environment. This quality of drama makes it an excellent vehicle for observation.

However, the realiability of creative drama as an observation tool must be confirmed by studies using valid observation instruments. Otherwise, information collected during viewing will be subjective and haphazard. Research for this investigation uncovered few observation instruments designed for use with drama. Those that do exist evaluate only drama or creativity skills.[4]

The works of Shaw and Ritch laid the groundwork for broadening the use of creative drama in observing students.[5] Both authors drew on available literature in the field of creative drama that illustrates specific educational objectives as set forth in Bloom's *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: Handbook I: Cognitive Domain.*[6] These statements ranged in form from descriptions of activities to declarations of creative drama objectives.

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[1]Richard M. Brandt, "An Historical Overview of Systematic Approaches to Observation in School Settings," in *Observation of Pupils and Teachers in Mainstream and Special Education Settings: Alternative Strategies*, eds. Richard A. Weinberg and Frank H. Wood (Minneapolis: U. Minn. Press,Inc., 1975): 9-38.

[2]Hilda Taba. *Curriculum Development: Theory and Practice* (N.Y.: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1962): 88.

[3]Peter Slade. *Child Drama* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1954): 112.

[4]Such as Nancy Hove Hensel, "The Development, Implementation and Evaluation of a Creative Drama Program for Kindergarten Children" (Ed.D. dissertation, University of Georgia, 1973); Gilbert N. Lazier, et al., *A Systematic Analysis of Dramatic Behavior Norms of Florida Elementary School Children. Final Report* (Arlington, Va.: ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 096589 95); Gilbert N. Lazier and Brian Sutton-Smith, *Assessment of Role Induction and Role Involvement in Creative Drama. Final Report* (Arlington, Va.: ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 039254 24); and Anne Thurman, Phyllis Mandler, and Norman D. Bowers, *The Development of Instruments Designed to Assess Pupil Ability in Creative Dramatics* (Evanston, IL: School District 65, 1968).

[5]Ann Marie Shaw, "The Development of a Taxonomy of Educational Objectives in Creative Dramatics in the United States Based on Selected Writings in the Field" (Ed.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1968); Pamela Sue Ritch, "Creative Drama as a Teaching Strategy: Historical Review and Organizing Framework" (Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin, 1978).

[6]Benjamin S. Bloom, et al., *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals: Handbook I: Cognitive Domain* (N.Y.: David McKay Co., Inc. 1956).

During the course of their studies, Shaw and Ritch confirmed two important relationships: one between creative drama objectives and educational objectives; and one between behaviors elicited during creative drama activities and illustrations of educational objectives as formulated by Bloom. However, the congruency established was based on the creative drama literature and not on direct observations.

In order to verify the relationship between behaviors manifested during creative drama activities and outcomes that illustrate educational objectives, appropriate observation instruments must be developed. First, however, creative drama must be established as a valid medium for observation techniques.

Purpose

It was the purpose of this study to explore the potential of creative drama as a vehicle for observation instruments. This pilot investigation endeavored only to establish the validity and the reliability of creative drama as a tool for assessment; it did not attempt to develop actual instruments. Behaviors to be evaluated were limited to those illustrating 2.0 Comprehension skills as defined in Bloom's *Taxonomy*.[7]

Two hypotheses were fundamental to this investigation:

(1) Behaviors elicited in selected creative drama activities demonstrate specific abilities that are illustrative of 2.0 Comprehension; and

(2) Specific behaviors that illustrate 2.0 Comprehension and that are elicited during creative drama activities can be isolated and identified.

Method

Participants

The subjects were twenty-eight children (ten male, eighteen female) in the fourth and fifth grades from schools and programs in Blacksburg, Virginia. All subjects were volunteers. Although no attempt was made to analyze the backgrounds of the children, Blacksburg is a predominantly middle-class, university-centered community.

The observers were five graduate students and one undergraduate student from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. All observers had some familiarity with child development theory, and all had worked with children in the subject age range. None of the observers was experienced in creative drama.

The leader and coordinator of the creative drama workshops was the author of this study.

Procedure

The subjects participated in creative drama workshops directed by the coordinator and viewed by the six observers. Prior to the first workshop, the observers met twice with the coordinator. The purpose of these meetings was to familiarize the observers with the study, Bloom's terms, and the creative drama activities to be used in the workshops.

Three one and one-half hour workshops with the subjects were held at one-week intervals in a room twenty-four by fifty feet. Before each workshop, the observers were paired off and labeled "pair one," "pair two," and "pair three." The pairings were changed for each of three workshops.

A different set of children, with seven to eleven subjects in each group, participated in each workshop. Three children in each group were targeted for observation and labeled "child one," "child two," and "child three." Observer pair one first focused on child one,

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[7] 2.00 Comprehension skills include:
2.10 Translation
2.20 Interpretation
2.30 Extrapolation

observer pair two on child two, and observer pair three on child three. After every four activities, the observer pairs changed their focus to the next consecutive target child.

Each workshop included an initial warm-up exercise and twelve activities. The activities were derived from statements about creative drama that were identified by Shaw and Ritch as illustrating the educational objectives set forth by Bloom in his 2.0 Comprehension category. Alternating activities were scored (that is, activity one, three, five, seven, nine, eleven), beginning with activity one.

Each scored activity was intended to elicit behaviors illustrative of one specific 2.0 Comprehension skill as established by Bloom. For example, in one study activity, pairs of children participated in short improvisations. Each improvisation was interrupted by the coordinator after several minutes of action. Then the targeted children were asked to think of an end for the improvisation. This activity was intended to elicit skill in 2.30 Extrapolation. The basis for the improvisation activity is found in Bloom's explanation of 2.30 Extrapolation: "The ability to deal with the conclusions of a work in terms of immediate inferences made from the explicit statements of others."[8]

Although the observers were aware of the specific skills involved, they were not informed of the correct correspondence between the activities and the skills.

The observers had six identical scoring sheets, one for each rated activity. The scoring sheets listed six selected skills that Bloom set forth illustrating 2.0 Comprehension. A Likert Scale from 0 to 4 appeared after each skill.

The observers scored only those skills for which ratable behaviors were actually seen. There was no mandate to comment on every skill. If no ratable behaviors were observed for a particular skill, the score of "0" was used. A score of "1" indicated "little ratable behavior observed;" "2" indicated "some ratable behavior observed;" "3" indicated a "good amount of ratable behavior observed;" "4" indicated a "high amount of ratable behavior observed."

Below each skill was space for the observers to record ratable behaviors viewed during the activity. These recorded behaviors were used by the observer to evaluate the child. They were also used by the observer as reference notes for the follow-up sessions with the coordinator.

Observer's Name: Pair Number: Date:

Activity: Child:

("0" no behavior observed; "1" little; "2" some; "3" good; "4" high)

Skill in predicting continuation of trends.	0	1	2	3	4
Given Geometric concepts in verbal terms, the ability to translate into visual or spatial terms.	0	1	2	3	4
The ability to interpret various types of social data.	0	1	2	3	4
The ability to grasp the thought of a work as a whole at any desired level of generality.	0	1	2	3	4
The ability to deal with the conclusions of a work in terms of immediate inferences from explicit statements.	0	1	2	3	4
The ability to translate an abstraction, such as some general principle, by giving an illustration or sample.	0	1	2	3	4

FIGURE 1
Scoring Sheet

[8]Bloom, p. 205

A debriefing meeting was held with each observer as soon after each workshop as possible. At that time the coordinator returned rating sheets and asked the observer to justify their ratings of the target child for each scoring sheets of that session.

Results

After the three workshops were held and the observer interviews were completed, the scoring sheets were evaluated by and coordinator. The evaluation was made on two levels: content validity and inter-rater reliability.

Content Validity

The first level evaluation attempted to verify the first hypothesis of this study: that is that behaviors elicited in selected abilities that illustrate 2.0 Comprehension. As stated earlier, each activity in the study was selected to demonstrate a specific skill in 2.0 Comprehension. A specific skill within its intended activity was termed a "correspondent skill." In other words, a correspondent skill is that skill designed to be elicited during a specific activity. If the observers were able to view ratable behaviors (indicated by a score of "1," "2," "3," or "4") in a high number of correspondent skills, then the behaviors elicited during these specific creative drama activities were being rated. Therefore, the relationship between the number of intended correspondent skills and the number of times those skills were rated was determined to be an indication of the validity of the activities as a vehicle to measure 2.0 Comprehension. In this study, correspondent skills were observed 88% of the time, significantly higher than could be expected by chance.[9] This high percentage strongly supports the hypothesis that selected creative drama activities elicit specific abilities that illustrate 2.0 Comprehension.

The least rated correspondent skill, observed only 55% of the time, was "Interpreting Social Data." Observers commented, during debriefing sessions, that they had difficulty scoring the Social Data skill because the consensus definition for this category was not as clear as were the definitions for the other skills. If the Social Data category is disregarded, the figure for the correspondent skills observed becomes 94%. Table 1 contains a complete breakdown of the percentage of correspondent skills observed.

Skill	Workshop Number			Average
	One	Two	Three	
Predicting Trends	100*	67	100	89
Translating Geometric Terms	100	100	100	100
Interpreting Social Data	83	50	33	55
Grasping the Thought	100	100	100	100
Dealing with Conclusions	83	100	83	89
Translating an Abstract	83	100	100	94
Average	92	86	86	88

*Based on six opportunities to rate correspondent skills (one correspondent skill × six observers = six opportunities to rate correspondent skills per scored activity).

TABLE 1
Percent of Correspondent Skills Observed

[9]In a Chi-square analysis $x^2 = 59.26$, degrees of freedom = 1, and probability < .005)

Inter-rater Reliability

The second level of evaluation focused on the rating scale itself and established inter-rater reliability of the scale. Inter-rater reliability was computed by dividing the number of scores upon which the observers were in agreement by the total number of opportunities for score agreement in that skill (one skill × three pairs of observers × six activities = eighteen opportunities for score agreement per skill per workshop).

The first part of the evaluation compared agreement between rated and unrated correspondent skills. In other words, the pair members either agreed or disagreed that a ratable behavior was observed (a rating of "1," "2," "3," or "4") or was not observed (a rating of "0"). Agreement among raters at this level was significantly higher than could be expected by chance, .87.[10]

A second part attempted a more exact comparison between observers. An observer pair was termed in agreement if their ratings were exactly the same (for example, "2" was termed in agreement if their ratings were exactly the same (for example, "2" and "2" or "0" and "0"). Agreement at this level, although it reached .78 in the final workshop, averaged a lower .46. While exact agreement of scores is still significantly higher than could be expected by chance, the .46 figure demonstrates the need to improve the process of scoring ratable behaviors.[11]

Discussion

Although procedural refinement is necessary, the results of this research do suggest that correspondent skills were observed in a systematic, reliable manner. If this assumption is correct, then the behaviors that the observers recorded and used to justify their ratings may be viewed as behaviors elicited during creative drama activities that illustrate 2.0 Comprehension. Agreement among the observers in rated behaviors for specific activities was interpreted as a standard by which the 2.0 Comprehension ability of other children could be determined when they participated in that activity. For example, in an activity wherein the children passed an imaginary ball that transformed into different sizes and shapes, the correspondent skill was: "Given geometric concepts in verbal terms, the ability to translate into visual or spatial terms."[12] All observers rated this skill based on viewing the target children adjusting their hands and body to correspond to the changes in size and shape of the imaginary ball. This behavior could then be used as a criteria in assessing the observation skill in 2.10 Translation in an observation instrument.

The role of the observers in this current study has only tentatively been explored. Obviously, all the data obtained in the study was a direct result of their input. However, two other factors involving the observers are of importance. First, that the observers were able to provide the data necessary to make this study productive is impressive in itself. None of the observers were experienced in creative drama, and none had previous knowledge of this type of testing. The ease with which a novice in testing of creative drama can learn to utilize this form of observation instrument was therefore demonstrated.

The second factor relating to the observers has to do with their reaction to the workshops. After the study had been completed, the observers commented on how well they came to know the target children they had been observing. They particularly noticed how the children's attitudes, abilities, and needs were strikingly apparent after such a brief period of viewing. These comments were significant because they demonstrate the speed with which information about a child can be obtained through creative drama, and the resultant efficiency with which the needs of the child can be addressed.

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[10]Level of agreement using the Pearson product moment coefficient correlation = .4678, degrees of freedom = 49, and probability < .005.

[11]Pearson product moment coefficient correlation = .4457, degrees of freedom = 49, and probability < .005.

[12]Bloom, p. 92.

Conclusions

This investigation demonstrated that specific creative drama activities can be expected to elicit certain types of behaviors with regularity. This consistency is necessary because it would be difficult, if not impossible, to develop standards for observation instruments based on non-repeated, random behaviors. The high frequency with which correspondent skills were observed illustrated that behaviors elicited in selected creative drama activities do demonstrate specific skills that illustrate 2.0 Comprehension, thus supporting the first hypothesis of this study.

However, if these behaviors are to become the basis for criteria, the second hypothesis of this study (that behaviors that illustrate 2.0 Comprehension can be isolated and identified) must also be confirmed. Obviously, if an appropriate behavior occurs in an activity but cannot be recognized as such, it cannot be included in the investigation. Since the observers were able to isolate, to identify, and to categorize behaviors that illustrate 2.0 Comprehension, this study can be said to show support for the second hypothesis.

The number of conclusions that can be extracted from this investigation attests to the productivity of the work. The most important of these conclusions is that it is possible to remove creative drama from the nebulous realm of intuition and place it within a more concrete context where it can be used as a reliable tool for assessment. However, as fruitful as this study appears to be, the results and conclusions of the work need yet to be validated. Even then, a great deal more research will be necessary in the other categories of Bloom's *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: Handbook I: The Cognitive Domain* before these initial explorations can evolve into a systematic, effective procedure that can evaluate the whole child. Developing these procedures is vital if creative drama is to become a respected vehicle for assessing children's skills through observation.

Robert J. Landy

AN EXPLORATION OF THE PROCESS OF LEARNING THROUGH DRAMA

During this century, a new interdisciplinary field has developed, primarily in England, America, Canada and Australia. It goes by many names: Educational Drama, Child Drama, Drama in Education, etc., and comprises, essentially, both the art of drama and theatre and the art and science of pedagogy. A substantial literature has grown, primarily uncovering its intellectual background, aims and techniques. However, research into the actual process of learning through drama has been scarce. Educational Drama specialists might know, at this point, what they want their students to learn through drama and how they, as educators, will go about teaching them, but they still know very little about how the process of learning through drama works.

When does the process begin? What are the principles that underlie the process? How does the school environment affect the process? How can the classroom be conceived to foster learning through drama? Is there a method of learning through drama? What is it like and what are its implications for educators? This paper is an attempt to begin to respond to these questions and to point toward the necessity of further research into building dramatic learning theory.

Within the field of Educational Drama, there is evidence to support the notion that everyday drama, like its counterpart, play,[1] is innate and very much a part of the developmental history of human beings. Although no one has been yet able to postulate and test the stages of a child's natural dramatic development with the precision of Piaget's stages of cognitive development[2] and Kohlberg's stages of moral development,[3] there have been attempts to specify age ranges in relation to dramatic principles of action and space, identification and interpretation.[4]

When most children enter school for the first time, they are presented with a whole new way of learning. Academics replace play. What was once a spontaneous and natural way of learning is now a planned, repetitive one. Even the content of learning has changed. Whereas before attending school, children learned about the use of their five senses, their bodies, the free flow of their thoughts and feelings, they now must learn about numbers and words and ideas. The child's environment is so altered that in order to learn, he or she must sit in a seat, facing the teacher at the front of the room. Where once there was free movement, now there is little movement. Where once there was active play, now there is passive work. Where once there were people talking at once, now only one person at a time

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[1]For an in-depth discussion of the relatonship between play and drama, see Richard Courtney, *Play, Drama and Thought* (N.Y.: Drama Book Specialists, 1974).

[2]See Jean Piaget, *Language and Thought of the Child* (N.Y.: Harcourt, Brace, 1926).

[3]See L. Kohlberg, "Moral Stages and Moralization," in T. Lickona, *Moral Development and Behavior* (N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976).

[4]For a discussion of dramatic developmental stages, see Peter Slade, *Child Drama* (London: University of London Press, 1954), pp. 19-83; Richard Courtney, "Drama and Pedogogy," *Stage Canada*, Supplement Vol. 6, No. 5a (1971), pp. 56-67; and Robert Landy, "Measuring Audience Response to Characters and Scenes in Theatre for Children –A Developmental Approach," *Children's Theatre Review*, XXVI, 3 (1977), pp. 10-13.

is allowed to speak. Where once there were many answers to any question, now there is only one correct answer.

To most children, used to free play, school must indeed be a strange environment. But it need not be so strange if the teacher is wise enough to value the principles of play and drama and apply them to classroom learning. Simply stated, these principles are:

1. the natural method of learning in childhood is play;[5]
2. play is reality testing, a way for the child to understand who he or she is and who he or she is within the world;
3. whenever there is play, there is drama;[6]
4. drama is an active rather than a narrative process, involving the whole self, including mind, body, emotion, intuition;
5. drama is a process of learning how to learn.

Of these principles, Number 5 may well be the most important for the teacher to understand. Implicit in this principle is that through drama one does not necessarily learn special subject content, i.e., the way our government works or long division, but rather the basic learning skills essential for directing one's own learning. Through drama, for example, one learns how to sharpen the senses, develop skills of concentration, rhythm and thinking on one's feet: all skills essential to furthering one's own learning of any content, whether reading, writing, math, science or physical education.

These dramatic skills are not explicitly taught in school. In fact, most of what is taught is based upon the rationale that students do not or cannot direct their own academic learning. But an alternative interpretation of the process of education, from an educational drama point of view, would be that students can indeed direct their own academic learning as they can direct their own play. The teacher's responsibility ought to be to help students develop those skills they need to direct their own learning. In other words, teachers should help students learn how to learn. In that, they must draw upon what is already a child's natural process of learning – play and drama.

The teacher must begin with the attitude that children's drama exists as a given in any classroom. It doesn't need to be taught or imposed. The teacher, then, must discover ways to channel children's natural play instincts toward an exploration of various educational issues. To do this, he or she would draw upon the students' natural abilities to engage in imitation, imagination, identification, role-playing and interpretation: all essential elements of the process of learning through drama.[7]

In looking at the required school curriculum, many teachers might feel there is no room for drama. A natural education is fine, they might say, but does it help students learn math, sciences, reading and writing? Where is the role-play and identification in numbers? Aren't reading, writing and calculating cognitive skills, and isn't drama an affective activity, better left to extracurricular scheduling?

It is difficult to defend a dramatic approach to learning arithmetic. Acting out numbers and dramatizing the processes of addition, subtraction and the like might be fun, but somewhat contrived. Yet if the teacher accepts the notion that the learning of numbers and mathematical processes requires concentration of attention and the ability to think abstractly, then he or she can work to strengthen these skills through drama.

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[5]Caldwell Cook, *The Play Way* (London: Heinemann, 1917).

[6]Slade, p. 23.

[7]For a discussion of imitation, identification, imagination and role-playing from a dramatic point of view, see Richard Courtney, and his "A Dramatic Theory of Imagination," *New Literary History*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (Sp., 1971) pp. 451-452. For a discussion of dramatic identification and interpretation, see Robert Landy, *CTR*,

Again, the teacher can take cues from the everyday drama of children. Child's play is serious business. It is often totally focused and concentrated upon a specific problem, i.e. how many dolls can sit at a dinner table, given so many chairs. It often breaks from the realistic into the abstract, non-literal mode, as when two pieces of cardboard in the hands of a child become the wings of a bird, and the child flies down the block accomplishing, in one flight of the imagination, a feat that has eluded adults since the beginning of time.

In fostering the process of learning how to learn, the teacher must first be able to delineate the modes of thought and action underlying any academic skills. If it is true that many of these modes are based in early pre-school learning through drama and play, then the teacher would do well to incorporate drama and play in school learning situations.

In teaching the recognition of practical value of numbers, it is certainly possible to utilize the child's natural inclinations to identify and role-play. Gavin Bolton, a drama specialist and former math teacher, tells of a situation where he played the role of a very stupid king who had a stomach ache and had to take his medicine.[5] There was a label on the medicine bottle that read: "take two teaspons every four hours." Through his pretended misreading of the label, he motivated his young students to teach him the correct numbers.

In such a situation, students quite naturally assume the role of teacher for a purpose – to educate an ignorant person, so that he will get well. In such role-play, many children will identify with the stupid king, in that they, too, feel academically inadequate at times. They will also identify with the teacher role, with one who knows the answers, thus feeling quite adequate and successful as both teacher and learner.

The educational relevance of identification and role-playing becomes more clearly apparent in such subjects as English and history. In learning to read, for example, the child can be encouraged to discover similarities and differences between himself or herself and the literary characters, in a manner similar to the pre-school identification with play and fantasy characters. History, too, can come alive not through a mechanical costume dramatization of the first Thanksgiving performed in an assembly program, but rather through an attempt to allow students to authentically identify with historical characters and to understand the nature of those historical dilemmas that make sense in terms of their own experience.

The everyday play of pre-school children is very much self-involved. All the world exists as a reflection of projection of self. As the child enters school, this self orientation has the advantage of allowing the teacher to find ways to personalize subject matter, thus motivating the students to retain interest and consequently, understanding. Yet, as the child more keenly develops the ability to distinguish self from others, self from world, the relationship to learning alters. The teacher must also alter his or her method of education to allow for an identification between self and subject content, as well as a distancing between self and content, so that the highest degree of interpretation can occur.

The relationship between identification and interpretation is a complex and variable one both in everyday life and in school. What remains constant in dramatic learning, as in child's play, is the inherent ability to identify with aspects of oneself and others; to imaginatively and physically act out the roles of self and others; and to make sense of these actions. This dramatic activity is cognitive as well as affective, psycho-motor, linguistic, and intuitive. It is dramatic to the extent that it represents a confluence of thought, feeling, fantasy, movement, language and intuition, whether it occurs in the playpen, the playground or the classroom.

To foster learning through drama, the teacher can study the models of the documentary film-maker and field researcher in the social sciences who subscribe to the common assumption that people behave more naturally within their natural environments. In a sense, documentary films (such as Frederick Wiseman's classical examinations of the high

[5]From an interview with Gavin Bolton, *Sunrise Semester*, "Drama in Education," WCBS-TV (October 15, 1979).

school, the mental institution, the welfare office and the like) can be seen as laboratories for the study of human behavior. Simply stated, a laboratory is a space removed from the everyday world where isolated aspects of the world can be studied in microcosm. For the film-maker and field researcher, the camera, tape-recorder and notebook become the instruments used to create the necessary separation. For the teacher who may well conceive of the classroom as a laboratory for human learning, the instrument is simulation. Through simulation, a version of outside reality is acted out or dramatized inside the classroom under controlled conditions by means of imitation, imagination, identification, role-playing, and interpretation.

As an example, a real event of some significance to many people is the depletion of the earth's natural resources. Several years ago, there was a severe drought in California, and the governor called upon all people of the state to conserve water. During a drama workshop in southern California, the visiting educational drama specialist, Dorothy Heathcote, created a laboratory in a fourth grade classroom to dramatize this situation and to help students understand their own sense of responsibility within their community.

Mrs. Heathcote began by taking the children through a simulated space journey to another planet, inhabited by creatures frozen into place, because their environment had been plagued by natural drought and human abuse. Through a series of dramatic experiences in movement, ritual and speech, the children learned how to free the creatures and to understand the effects of natural and human abuse upon the environment. Mrs. Heathcote would often interrupt the drama experience and allow for discussion to encourage the children to reflect upon their drama, to understand its significance and to search for ways of deepening their role-play. In this way, students became both actor and observer of themselves within a dramatic laboratory experience. They identified with the characters they portrayed, and through their concern for the victims of environmental abuse, they were led into an understanding of the consequences of human abuse and neglect during times of natural crisis. In transforming the classroom into a dramatic laboratory, Mrs. Heathcote was able to create a simulation that led the children toward such an understanding.

The idea of the dramatic laboratory could work with any subject matter concerning human issues. The only essential requirements for the dramatic laboratory would be an outside reality and a willingness to re-create that reality inside the classroom. The notion of two realities, that of everyday life and that of the re-created dramatic world, leads to an essential understanding of the process of learning through drama. Through this process, the learner unconsciously makes a separation between "everday world" and "play or stage world." The "play world" becomes a laboratory in which developing conceptions of the everyday world are tested. The converse of "all the world's a stage" holds true – the staged reality represents the reality of everyday life.

The relationship between "drama/play reality" and "everyday reality" provides an understanding of the construct, representation, that may elucidate the method of learning through drama. By way of definition, Webster refers to "representation" as: "The act or instance of representing, which is to say, presenting or picturing to the mind; putting clearly to the mind. . ."[9] A second definition is: "Presentation, production, or performance of a play, etc."[10]

Taken together, both definitions describe dramatic learning. Through representation, a person mentally pictures a portion of the everyday world. That is to say, upon perceiving reality, it is transformed into mental images. Then, through another process of transformation, these mental images are "presented" as observable actions, as behaviors. An interpretation of that portion of the empirical world is "produced." An external action is

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[9]*Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language* (Cleveland and N.Y.: World Publishing Company, 1962): 1235.

[10]Ibid.

"performed" based upon the picture in the mind. Thus, representation is both an internal cognitive process and an external process of enactment.

The transformational stage of forming mental images mediates between the two realities of the everyday and the dramatic. When the individual finally engages in a dramatic action, he or she is, in fact, presenting reality again, re-presenting reality. As in any laboratory experience, the individual engaged in everyday drama creates a microcosm of the world in play. This is done to allow a degree of control. A child who needs to better understand his or her position within the family might well create a miniature world of dolls. The dolls are controlled in an absolute way that tests out the internalized conceptions of his or her family. Through controlled play, representation of his or her reality of family is created. Episodes of family life are re-presented in order to gain an undersatnding of its complexities. All human beings, whether children at play or adults at work, have a need to make sense of the world they live in. To do this, they must find ways to isolate a managable segment of reality. The scientist grows cultures and simulates reality under highly controlled conditions in the laboratory. The artist holds the mirror up to nature on a stage, a canvas, a piece of paper. The child constructs a miniature doll world in a room, a miniature battlefield on a playground. And as they use the same method of representation, their roles become interchangable and sometimes, indistinguishable.

Because dramatic representation as a construct has not been refined or studied, it is difficult to specify precisely what one learns through this method. We can speculate in a general way, though, that through representation one learns those cognitive, affective, psychomotor and linguistic skills necessary for all further learning. That is to say, through representation, one learns how to learn. In re-presenting his or her family as dolls, for example, the child is developing an understanding of a family and its role expectations, a moral position regarding behavior in role, a series of physical behaviors necessary to feed, clothe, and expreess affection, and a language system in which to communicate verbally. The quality of dramatic representation will be tested through interactions with those in the everyday environment.

There are many implications of learning through dramatic representation. If this is indeed a natural method of learning, then those adults responsible for directing the learning of children must consciously foster dramatic learning. For parents, this might mean an encouragement of spontaneous play, rather than a push toward an early mastery of academics. Commenting upon a new book about the crucial educational value of play,[11] Fred M. Hechinger notes: "Success-oriented lessons to prepare children for school replace real child's play, which, at the heart of the Piers-Landau thesis, is seen as the 'surest fastest path to learning, self-confidence and the mastery of many skills.' "[12]

For the teacher, the notion of learning through dramatic representation implies that the classroom become more like a laboratory where issues of concern to the students are represented and interpreted. Also, as representation suggests that each individual transforms everyday reality into personal mental images, the teacher must attend more fully to individual differences within the classroom. He or she must encourage each student's experssion according to their own representations of reality, rather than to chronically imitate the behavior of others. He or she must understand the stages of human development to encourage more imitative behaviors when they are indicated and more creative role-playing behaviors when they are indicated.

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[11]Maria W. Piers and Genevieve Millet Landau, *The Gift of Play* (Walker and Company, 1980).
[12]Fred M. Hechinger, "About Education," *The New York Times* (October 21, 1980): C4.

And finally, dramatic representation implies that the goal of learning is to perpetuate further learning. Through representation, one learns how to further re-present the world and thus make sense of it. It is a natural process that can be stifled by a parent or teacher who views learning solely in terms of the acquisition of factual knowledge and mechanical procedures.

For the parent, administrator and teacher to openly embrace the significance of learning through drama, we must encourage more research into the nature of dramatic learning. In a time of economic and political uncertainty, of "back to basics," accountability and cutbacks of new programs and young teachers, we must, through our classroom work, our homework, our study of Educational Drama, discover the ways and means to demonstrate the essence of John Dewey's radical statement: "...the aim of education is to enable individuals to continue their education...The object and reward of learning is continued capacity for growth."[13]

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[13]John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (N.Y.: Free Press, 1966): 100.

Roger L. Bedard

CHARLOTTE B. CHORPENNING'S WORK WITH ADULT DRAMA

Charlotte B. Chorpenning, noted children's theatre theorist, director and playwright, lived a rich and varied life. Born in 1872, Chorpenning worked through several related careers before she became formally involved in children's theatre. She was, in fact, sixty years old when she was named director of children's theatre at the Goodman Theatre of The Chicago Art Institute. Under her direction, the Goodman Children's Theatre became one of the most respected organizations of its kind, and this success was due almost totally to Chorpenning's own endeavors. Between 1931, when she accepted the position, and 1951, the year she retired, the Goodman Children's Theatre presented over eighty productions. The majority of these were written, as well as directed, by Chorpenning herself.

The tremendous contributions that Chorpenning made to American children's theatre are well documented. However, it it less well known that prior to her work with children's theatre, Chorpenning devoted a portion of her life to writing adult drama. Indeed, this writing was so important to Chorpenning that she, at one time, worked to make a career for herself in this field. Although she was never completely successful in this regard, an analysis of her training and work with adult drama offers many relevant insights into her later successful work with children's theatre. These insights relate both to the brief but thorough training she received as a student of playwriting, as well as to the unique combined sociological and aesthetic perspective of theatre that she developed as a playwright.

Chorpenning's interest in drama can be traced, in part, to her work as an English teacher, first in high school in Springfield, Illinois (1895), then at a private school in Denver, Colorado (1901-1904), and finally at Winona Normal School in Winona, Minnesota (1904-1921). By her own account, her work with students dramatizing Shakespeare in her literature classes first underscored the importance of drama to her.[1]

Chorpenning did not turn her attention to play writing until she was almost forty years old. Although she had had some prior experience writing poetry and short stories, she had had no experience or training with writing drama.[2] According to Chorpenning, it was through her husband's insistence that she first applied her talents to writing plays:

> I suppose the acceptance of a story or two put it into my husband's head that I could write a play that he had wanted to see written. My protests that the only plays I knew were Shakespeare's made no difference.[3]

As a direct result of her husband's encouragement, Chorpenning wrote her first play, "Between The Lines."[4] This project was apparently very satisfying for her, as she then

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[1]Charlotte B. Chorpenning, *Twenty-One Years With Children's Theatre* (Anchorage, Kentucky: Children's Theatre Press, 1954): 3.

[2]Chorpenning had at least one short story published: Charlotte L. Barrows, "Elizabeth," *Colliers*, 24 March 1906: 16-18.

[3]Charlotte Chorpenning, untitled essay "written in answer to a request from a student working for a masters degree in a university whose committee demanded an account of a biography showing how I came to write plays for children," TS, p. 2. Copy in files of author.

[4]Although this play was produced professionally in 1916, no record of publication or copyright can be found. Chorpenning refers to the play as her "first play" in previously cited essay, p.4.

began to contemplate studying playwriting seriously. To that end, in 1912, she applied for admission to George Pierce Baker's famous playwriting class at Radcliffe.[5] It is probable that she used a version of "Between The Lines" for her application, because admission to this famous group could be gained only upon submission of an original work.

Baker invited Chorpenning to join his class. In the Fall of 1913, Chorpenning took a leave of absence from her job at Winona and traveled to Cambridge to begin this new field of study. And, she was so successful during her first year of study with Baker, that she was invited to remain an additional year to enroll in a special advanced playwriting class.[6]

During this time, Chorpenning developed a close personal, and professional relationship with Professor Baker, and she profited much from his criticism of her work. Her recollections of her first critical session with him underscores the respect that she had for him:

> My scenario was up for discussion in 47 today. It is my first taste of criticism. I got some fine points and I shall work it over tomorrow if I feel right. He (Baker) is a marvel. Everything he says in criticism is so perfectly *obvious* (emphasis hers) the moment he says it. You wonder how any sane person failed to see it before.[7]

These sessions were very important to Chorpenning's development as a playwright, and for years afterward she continued to send Baker copies of her work so that he might criticize them.

In addition to classroom work with Baker, Chorpenning also became heavily involved in the activities of Workshop 47, a laboratory theatre organization created to produce some of the plays from the playwriting classes.[8] During the 1914-1915 season, the Workshop produced four plays, and Chorpenning figured prominently in three of them. In the first two productions she served as an actress in major roles. For the fourth production, Chorpenning's own "Between The Lines," was produced by the group, and she served as director. It is important that Chorpenning was allowed to direct a play in the Workshop, an honor offered to only a few students. With only "one or two exceptions" Baker himself directed all plays in the Workshop program.[9]

Thus Chorpenning supplemented her classroom work with a myriad of practical experiences in theatre production. This training and experience, though of limited duration, occupied her total energies during those two years. As such, they provided a sound philosophical as well as practical base for all of her later work in theatre. And, even more importantly to Chorpenning, it provided a direct connection for her first professional work as a dramatist.

Little is known about what plays Chorpenning wrote to satisfy the various assignments for the two, year-long, playwrighting classes. However, records indicate that her final projects for each of the classes were awarded prizes related to the Craig Prize Play Competition.

This competition was to honor the best play written by a student of either Radcliffe or Harvard each year. The prize was $500.00 and the promise of a professional production in John Craig's Castle Square Theatre in Boston.[10] In 1915 Chorpenning won the Craig Prize

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[5]Chorpenning, essay, p.4.

[6]"Mrs. Chorpenning Wins Prize For Dramatic Work," *Winona Republican-Herald*, 12 May 1915, p.2.

[7]Letter to Alice Barrows from Charlotte Chorpenning, n.d. From collection of Chorpenning correspondence supplied by Ruth Chorpenning Norris. Collection in personal files of author.

[8]Information regarding activities of Workshop 47 taken from scrapbook entitled, "The 47 Workshop," George Pierce Baker Collection, Harvard University.

[9]Cecil Hinkel, "An Analysis and Evaluation of the 47 Workshop of George Pierce Baker" (Ph.D. Disseration, Ohio State University, 1959): 203.

[10]Wisner P. Kinne, *George Pierce Baker and The American Theatre* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968): 145.

with what was apparently a revised version of "Between The Lines." In the previous year, 1914, she had won second prize in the same competition with a play entitled "Aid To Pearson."[11]

When Chorpenning returned to her teaching position at Winona Normal School, she not only carried with her sharpened skills as a theatre artist, but also, as a result of winning the Craig Prize, a commitment for a professional production of "Between The Lines." Chorpenning resumed her teaching duties that Fall, but her major interest was still on her work in theatre. She was to pursue this interest for the remainder of her life.

The immediate task at hand for Chorpenning was to prepare for the production of "Between The Lines," which was scheduled for January of 1916. Her correspondence with Baker and others during this period underscores the degree to which she was hopeful that this production might mark the beginning of her career as a professional playwright. Chorpenning traveled to Boston to work with the director during the rehearsal period, and was in the audience of the Castle Square Theatre on opening night, 7 February, 1916.[12] She remained in Boston for part of the run of the play "studying the effect of the play upon the audience and making little changes in the lines where deemed advisable."[13]

The general critical reaction to the play was not over-whelmingly positive in spite of the fact that it played to capacity houses throughout the short run. At least one critic voiced a very strong dislike for the play:

> In the first place the new prize play is without sustained interest. By its construction it is disjointed and broken up into episodes that are really plays by themselves. . . . There is a superfluity of dialogue, not too interesting in itself, and a lack of action that is strikingly evident. . . . .
>
> In fact there was an amateur flavor about the play; a lot talk over the heads of the proletariat; academic in a way; a discussion of the power of heredity and environment.[14]

After that production closed, the play attracted little additional professional interest. However, Chorpenning, seemingly undaunted, quickly turned her attention to her next play, and her next hope for success. She had, in fact, carried "two acts of a new play with an outline of the third act," with her on the trip to Boston so that Baker might critique it.[15]

Chorpenning returned to a special summer session of Workshop 47 in 1916, apparently hoping at that time get a "tryout" production of this new play.[16] According to Workshop records, no play by Chorpenning was produced that summer.

Still undaunted, Chorpenning prepared to produce the play herself in Winona. It was her feeling that even a Winona production might spark the interest of a professional producer. This production did not have that result, but it did figure prominently in Chorpenning making a career for herself with theatre. It was because of this production that Chorpenning became interested in what she labeled as "community drama," and this work, in turn, led to her later work in children's theatre.

Chorpenning proceeded to cast this new play – which came to be called "A Man To A Woman" – with friends and acquaintances in Winona. Using the "billiard room" in the

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[11]"Mrs. Chorpenning Wins Prize For Dramatic Work," *Winona Republican-Herald*, 12 May 1915, p.2. These plays remain unpublished.

[12]"Prize Play Presented," *Winona Republican-Herald*, 8 February 1916, p.5.

[13]"Mrs. Chorpenning To Remain in Boston," *Winona Republican-Hearld*, 14 February 1916, p.2.

[14]F.H. Cushman, "New Harvard Play Lacks Necessary Heart Interest," *Boston Evening Record*, 8 February 1916. Newspaper clipping from Robinson Locke Scrapbook, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library.

[15]Letter to George Pierce Baker from Charlotte Chorpenning, 26 February 1916. All Baker/Chorpenning correspondence found in George Pierce Baker Collection, Harvard University.

[16]Letter to George Pierce Baker from Charlotte Chorpenning, 26 April 1916.

home of one of the cast members as a laboratory theatre, Chorpenning's little theatre group began to attract attention throughout the city, including prominent billing in the local newspaper:

> Winona people will be first-nighters December 18 at a play which is engaging the interest of New York managers, and which will receive attention at their hands after its tryout here. . . .
>
> The play is a tense drama. It is not an amateur production; and the work of the cast has proved far from amateurish.[17]

The play opened at the Winona Opera House on 18 December 1916. Although the play was greeted enthusiastically, it did not catch the attention of New York managers, and no professional production resulted from this local effort. After this setback Chorpenning seemed to lose her interest in seeking a professional outlet for her work. This may have been caused, in part, by her growing interest in working with community theatre groups. Immediately after the production of "A Man To A Woman," Chorpenning enthusiastically became involved in all manner of local theatre activities. These included plays at the Normal School, and the creation of a community-based group called Winona Players.

In 1917 Chorpenning used this group to produce a large "patriotic Vaudeville" to raise money for the Women's War Fund. She found the project to be satisfying and rewarding:

> The quality of. . .support was shown in the completeness with which every person engaged met every responsibility, and in the patience and cheer of the workers under the trying rehearsal conditions created by the need of haste. What Winona can do with such resources. . . , it is difficult to overestimate.[18]

After the vaudeville, Chorpenning quickly moved on to another project. She discussed this work in a letter to George Pierce Baker:

> It started as a farce, desired to become a social problem play (the 'rich' and the 'poor,' as I hear them at war in the social work I have been deep in this year) and has ended being a fairly constructed comedy.[19]

The nature of Chorpenning's "deep" involvement in "social work" is not known. It is probable that she was referring to work undertaken, in part, for the Women's War Fund, because in a later letter to Baker she refers to a "mad scramble of patriotic addresses" for that group.[20]

In May of 1918 Chorpenning began a project that combined her work in community drama and social work with her work in education, and this project was to ultimately lead Chorpenning into a new career. The project was a "big dramatic evening" to be presented at a convention of the Southeast Minnesota Education Association the following November in Winona. This event was to include three one-act plays illustrating how patriotism could be taught through the regular channels of school work.[21] Chorpenning immediately set to work on the task of writing and directing these three plays, but she used very different techniques to accomplish this task than those she customarily employed. She did not write

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[17]"Mrs. Chorpenning's Play to be Presented," *Winona Republican-Herald*, 4 December 1916, p.5.
[18]"Mrs. Chorpenning's Statement," *Winona Republican-Herald*, 15 December 1917, p. 16.
[19]Letter to George Pierce Baker from Charlotte Chorpenning, 6 April 1918.
[20]Letter to George Pierce Baker from Charlotte Chorpenning, 4 May 1918.
[21]Letter to George Pierce Baker from Charlotte Chorpenning, 4 May 1918.

three different plays on the appropriate theme and select casts to perform them. Rather, she selected three separate community gorups,and worked closely with them so that they might have direct input into developing plays that were specifically related to their own perspectives of patriotism. It was a unique approach that combined traditional theatre techniques with elements of creative dramatics and improvisation.

Three plays resulted from this collaboration. The first, "Uncle Sam Helps Out," was presented by the Gilmore Valley Farmer's Club. This play offered a view of the farmers' relationship to the war effort. The second play, "Whose Country," was produced by members of a Polish literary society who had strong feelings about their place in Winona's hierarchical society. The play specifically presented their bitterness about not being recognized for their contributions to the war effort. The third play, "Sauce for the Gander," was presented by a recreation club, and offered a vehicle for songs and dances as the club members dramatized their feelings about "slackers" in war time.[22]

Through her work with these three groups Chorpenning refined her own theories about community drama. Although these theories were not completely original with her, she was able to combine her own perspectives as a dramatist, teacher, and social worker to develop a very unique approach. Chorpenning summarized these theories in an article for *The Quarterly Journal of Speech Education.* In that account she clearly reveals that her philosophy about community drama was markedly different from her approach to other theatre activities:

> The difference springs from the difference in the end in view in the two productions. The first aims for praise; it wants to be pronounced better than others, either to draw in competition with others as in the case of the professional play, or to bring honor to the class or coach, as is too often the case in a class play. The second aims for self-expression in a community by the liveliest possible pleasure and thinking in rehearsals, and the fullest possible cooperation of the whole community in the process of getting the play on. It will not, therefore, ape the professional play in casting or technique. It will dare to distribute the parts for the pleasure and profit they will give the actors; it will have the patience to forego short cut and imitative methods in coaching.[23]

Chorpening believed that the play shouldn't be written *for* a group. Rather, she notes, "you find your play in the people you are dealing with; then get it out of them."[24] The specific techniques she used for the plays about patriotism are made clear in the following description:

> The theme or mood desired is chosen by those who ask for the play, and discussed freely. Then Mrs. Chorpenning works out a plot which will carry that meaning, or give expression to the desired mood, and submits it to the group. When it has been changed and developed to please them the dialogue is written and the play is put into trial rehearsal. During the early rehearsals any changes in the scenes or the wording which the actors desire are made. Sometimes, these changes are comparatively slight; sometimes they amount to rewriting the play. The play is then put into final shape, and rehearsed for production.[25]

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[22]Charlotte B. Chorpenning, "Putting On A Community Play," *The Quarterly Journal of Speech Education*, V (January, 1919): 32.
[23]Ibid., p.34.
[24]Ibid., p. 35.
[25]"Community Plays," *1919 Wenonah* (Winona: Winona Normal School): 72.

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Chorpenning's experience with these productions marked a major turning point in her work as a theatre artist. These isolated community drama experiments were to have marked effect upon all of her subsequent work with both adult and child drama.

In most of Chorpenning's later writing for child audiences she employed traditional playwriting techniques. However, through her work with community drama, she developed a sensitivity to the "process" as well as the "product" of dramatic production. Such a heightened sensitivity not only helped her sharpen her skills as a playwright, but also aided her immeasurably in her work as a director and teacher. Over a decade later, Chorpenning taught a class at Northwestern University entitled "Social Aspects of Dramatic Activity." The following account, provided by a former student of the class, underscores the degree to which Chorpenning incorporated the techniques she first used with community drama:

> She turned our world upside down in many cases, because she advocated *not* type casting (emphasis hers) and other principles which seemed revolutionary. . .She stressed interaction of individual actors as themselves and as the characters they represented, interaction of director and actors, development of character and of empathy, the desire to project and communicate with an audience, and interaction with an audience.[26]

Not only did these community drama projects cause Chorpenning to alter her methods of working with drama, but they also led directly to her later career in children's theatre.

At some time in 1920, or early 1921, Chorpenning was invited to Minneapolis by the League of Women Voters to create a community play for their use. The result, a play entitled "Dearie Won't Do," chronicled a current dispute in which the organization was then involved. The play centers around the attempts by the League to battle a male-dominated board of review in attempting to upgrade the conditions encountered by women and children working in factories.[27]

The project in Minneapolis was followed by a similar one in Cleveland, as Chorpenning became famous for her ability to use drama as a vehicle to voice the social concerns of a given group, as well as to facilitate the interpersonal relationships within that group.[28] Chorpenning's expertise in community drama next caught the interest of the head of the Recreation Training School, located at Hull House in Chicago:

> Neva L. Boyd. . .wired me to stop over on my way to Cleveland, to discuss such use of drama with her students. After the lecture she offered me a position in her school.[29]

Chorpenning eagerly accepted the invitation.

It was not long after Chorpenning began her work with Boyd that she was formally introduced to children's theatre. In 1927 Boyd's Recreation Training School was merged with Northwestern University. As a result of this merger, Chorpenning joined the faculty of the School of Speech at Northwestern. This assignment caused her to share an office with Winifred Ward, who was already actively involved in her own Children's Theatre of

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[26]Letter received from Mary Dodge, 4 March 1978.

[27]Chorpenning mentions the community play in *Twenty-One Years*, p. 5. Specific information about the play taken from copy in archives of Copyright Office, Library of Congress.

[28]Ibid.

[29]Chorpenning, essay, p. 4.

Evanston. Ward quickly convinced Chorpenning to use her theatre experience to help expand the repertoire of plays for children. In 1919, just two years after they worked together on revisions of a script of *The Wizard of Oz*, Ward produced three children's plays written by Chorpenning. This included one of Chorpenning's most famous plays, *The Emperor's New Clothes*.[30] Chorpenning was well on her way to becoming a successful children's theatre playwright.

By the time that Chorpenning died in 1955, her influence could be seen in virtually every aspect of American children's theatre. And it was through her work as a playwright that she made her most visible contributions to the field. Throughout her lifetime, she wrote over forty-five children's plays, twenty-five of which were ultimately published. By mid-century these plays were being performed by all manner of amateur and professional children's theatre organizations.

Chorpenning did not begin her work with children's theatre until relatively late in her life. As a direct result of her prior experience in professional theatre and community drama, Chorpenning was equally confident and successful with process-centered creative drama as well as product-centered children's theatre. Chorpenning's rich and varied background made her well-qualified for her work in children's theatre. Her position at the Goodman Theatre gave her a unique creative outlet that combined her expertise as a playwright, director, and teacher. Her success in these endeavors has had a profound effect on American children's theatre.

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[30]Winifred Ward, "The Children's Theatre of Evanston: An Informal History," written for the Evanston Historical Society. TS, 1973. Copy from Northwestern University Archives.